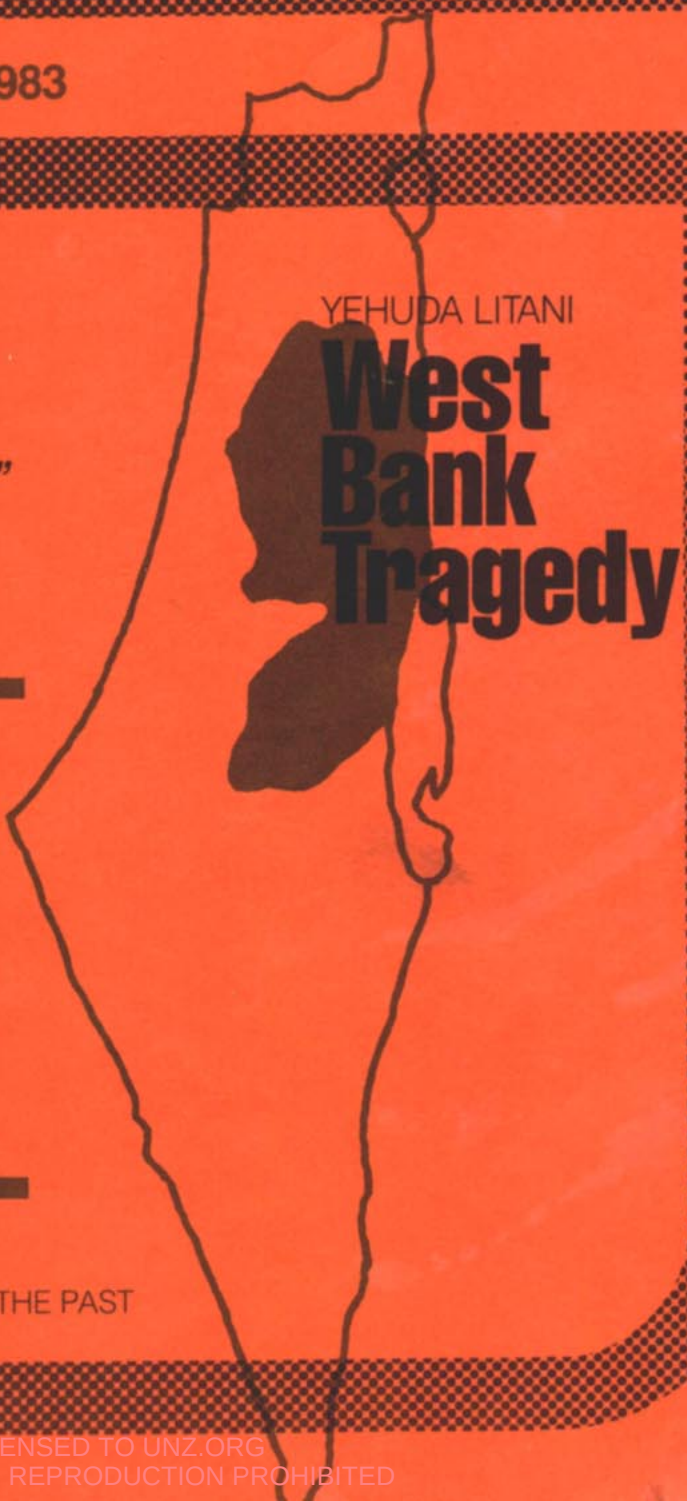
dissent

$3.50/Fall 1983



WALTER DEAN BURNHAM
Why Is the Right Ascendant?

D. A. N. JONES
"Labour Isn't Working"

THOMAS E. WEISSKOPF
How Strong an Economic Recovery?

YEHUDA LITANI
West Bank Tragedy

ROBERT HEILBRONER
A Feasible Vision of Socialism

MICHAEL WALZER
The Politics of Michel Foucault

GEORGE KONRÁD
Censorship and State-Owned Citizens

Rebecca West—
A STRONG VOICE FROM THE PAST

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

WALTER DEAN BURHAM teaches political science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His most recent books are *The Current Crisis in American Politics* (1982) and *Democracy in the Making* (1983).

MITCHELL COHEN teaches political science at Baruch College of the City University of New York and is editor of the labor Zionist journal *Jewish Frontier*. He is at work on a study of the Marxism of Lucien Goldmann.

JACK GREENBERG, the director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., has been devoted for many years to the cause of civil rights.

D. A. N. JONES has been Labour Councillor in the London Borough of Lambeth and a member of the editorial staffs of the *Tribune*, the *New Statesman*, and the *Listener*.

DAVID KUSNET is a staffer for AFSCME.

ROBERT LEITER's reviews have appeared in *Dissent* and other journals.

BENJAMIN MARTIN, who is working on a history of Spanish trade unionism and labor relations, has recently been in Spain.

NICOLAUS MILLS teaches literature at Sarah Lawrence College. He is the author of *The New Journalism* and of *Busing U.S.A.*, and now writing a book about the Mississippi Summer Project of 1964.

CAROL O'CLEIREACAIN is chief economist and assistant director of research at District Council 37, AFSCME, in New York City, and also serves on the board of directors of the Council on Economic Priorities.

MARVIN E. ROZEN teaches economics at the Pennsylvania State University and has just published a book on the economics of work reorganization.

GUS TYLER, the assistant president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, writes a nationally syndicated column and is the author of a number of books—his latest, *Scarcity*.

NORMAN WAITZMAN, a doctoral candidate at American University, teaches economics at Mount Vernon College. His essay is to be part of a Democratic Project study on New Right economic literature.

THOMAS E. WEISSKOPF teaches economics at the University of Michigan and is an active member of the Union for Radical Political Economics. Among his books are *The Capitalist System* (with Richard Edwards and Michael Reich) and *Beyond the Waste Land* (with Samuel Bowles and David Gordon). □

DISSENT (ISSN 0012-3846), issued October 1, 1983, is published quarterly, winter, spring, summer, and fall, by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc., 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. Subscriptions: $14.00 for one year; $25.00 for two years; $9.00 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add $3.00 for mailing costs per year; institutional rate $19.00 per year, $35.00 for two years, single copy $3.50. All payments from foreign countries must be made by United States money orders or checks payable in United States currency. Single copy, $3.50. For special rates on bulk orders from organizations, teachers, etc., write directly to DISSENT. For information on newsstand and bookstore distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 155 West Fifteenth Street, New York, N.Y. 10001.

© 1983 by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc. (FSISI). Permission to reprint any article must be obtained from the publishers. • Manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. • Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. • Volume 30, Number 4 (whole No. 133).

• DISSENT does not engage in lobbying nor support candidates or legislation.

Front Cover Design by Robert Schwartz.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

U.S.–Mexico Relations

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

Edited by Clark W. Reynolds & Carlos Tello. History and geography have linked the destinies of the United States and Mexico, and current events portend dramatically increasing interdependence in the future. But just how much economic and social interaction is in the long-term interests of each partner? This first volume in a series derived from conferences sponsored by the Project on United States–Mexico Relations is unique in providing a truly binational perspective on the subject. Written by experts from both countries about both countries, the sixteen papers assess the extent to which different groups in each nation would benefit from more or less interdependence in trade, migration, agricultural and industrial production, finance and investments, foreign policy, and national security measures. $25.00

The Future of Central America

POLICY CHOICES FOR THE U.S. AND MEXICO

Edited by Richard R. Fagen & Olga Pellicer. Deeply rooted in the past, the crisis wracking Central America has been profoundly conditioned by the mixture of prosperity, poverty, mounting social tensions, and militarism that has characterized most of the area since the 1940's. In this second book in a series derived from binational conferences sponsored by the Project on United States–Mexico Relations, a group of Latin and North American scholars examine the past, present, and future regional roles of the two dominant outside powers. What are the policies of Mexico and the United States toward Central America? What kinds of policies would contribute to peace and stability in the region? The ten papers show the different ways the two countries perceive the crisis, and thus their differing aims and strategies for dealing with it. Cloth, $20.00; paper, $11.95

Order from your bookstore, please

Stanford University Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

INDEX on CENSORSHIP

How many of these topics concern you?

— Survival of literature in Eastern Europe
— Book burning in the USA
— Vietnam — a culture destroyed
— Writers and apartheid
— Freedom to write in Iran
— Disappeared writers in Argentina

These are all topics covered in recent issues of *Index on Censorship* the magazine devoted to the defense of freedom of expression worldwide.

Index's coverage is wide ranging and politically impartial including the press, literature and the arts, broadcasting and academic freedom. It also publishes regularly banned literature and poetry.

'Needs to be read by anyone who wants to know his time' Arthur Miller

'One of the most interesting publications we know of' The New Yorker

☐ Yes I would like one year's subscription to Index on Censorship at $25 (6 issues)

☐ I enclose check/money order for $

☐ Please bill me

☐ In the first instance please send me a free sample copy.

Return this form to:
Index on Censorship, c/o Fund for free expression, 36 W 44th St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ronald Radosh

The Reagan policy in Central America appears to be moving toward even further disasters than at first seemed possible. The resignation of Secretary of State Alexander Haig seemed to be a portent of a more rational policy—a retreat from viewing the region as a zone of East-West conflict. At least, one could hope there would be a toning down of the rhetoric that made a political solution that much harder to obtain.

Recent events indicate that such hopes were illusory. As UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick moves to prominence as the major shaper of policy for Central America, Ambassador to El Salvador Dean Hinton stepped down and Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders was forced out. How bizarre that Hinton and Enders are suspect as "doves"; Hinton because he made a statement merely suggesting that right-wing death squads were as much of a danger to democracy in El Salvador as left-wing guerrillas; Enders because of his support of a "dual-track" policy—military aid while favoring quiet movement toward negotiations with the left. Now Enders is free to converse with Felipe Gonzalez, whose efforts to serve as a mediator in the region have met only with rebuffs from the Administration in Washington.

The Administration promises that it is not even considering sending U.S. troops to the area. But if our security is *really* so deeply at stake as it says, the time will have to come, as it did in Vietnam, when we either abandon our security needs or protect them with whatever force is necessary. Fortunately, the American people seem to hold to a different logic. A recent *Washington Post*/ABC News poll indicated that the majority of the population does not see our interests threatened and opposes, even after the president's speech to both houses of Congress, drastic military action in Central America. And praise of sorts goes to those generals in the Pentagon who publicly warn that they do not favor sending in our boys when the people back home will not stand behind such an effort. The military may yet save us from the wrath of the civilians.

It is true, as others have argued in *Dissent*, that many of the "left" regimes in Latin America seem to move quickly to a thoroughgoing Leninization of their political structures. The Cuban and Soviet model, with each passing day, seems to become more surely a model for the Sandinists in Nicaragua. It seems a long time since their leadership was talking about pluralism, democracy, and nonalignment.

□

Deplorable as this development is, the Reagan support of armed rebellion by the *contras* based in Honduras has made it much easier for the Sandinist commanders to push their country over the edge to Leninism. An interesting parallel can be drawn by taking a look at the events surrounding the Czech coup of 1948—the first modern example of how a coalition government collapsed and was replaced by a ruthless Stalinist regime.

In the May 1983 *Encounter*, a journal not exactly known for its friendship to communism, author Richard Mayne presents a fascinating account of how Stalin put the coup into operation. He includes a little-known item that reveals how the U.S. State Department saw the Beneš-Masaryk democratic government as too "pro-Communist," simply because it was doing what it could under difficult circumstances to maintain its democratic structure and neutrality.

Desperate for economic aid from the United States—especially the sale of available wheat—Jan Masaryk found that American officials were not responsive to his requests. Indeed, the U.S. ambassador to Czechoslovakia saw aid as a mechanism to pressure the government to be more pro-U.S. and less neutral. The U.S. never came through, and Stalin took the opportunity to promise delivery of the needed wheat. The Czech trade minister wrote Masaryk:

> Gottwald got in touch with Stalin, who promised the required wheat . . . and now these idiots in Washington have driven us straight into the Stalinist camp. . . . The fact that not America but Russia had saved us from starvation will have a tremendous effect inside Czechoslovakia—even among the peo-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ple whose sympathies are with the West rather than Moscow.

A good case can be made out that the "idiots in Washington" are still doing what they can to drive many into the Soviet camp, as well as into unwanted alliances with authoritarians of the "left."

In a brilliant piece of reportage and analysis in the June 1983 *Worldview*, Robert Leiken of the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies indicates that the major guerrilla leadership in El Salvador does not favor a military victory by their own forces. They favor leaving intact the Salvadoran army and its officer corps, and having their own units integrated into it. Ferman Cienfuegos, the top FMLN commander, emphasized to Leiken his opposition to the Brezhnev Doctrine. The rationale for Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, he pointed out, could be used easily by the Reagan administration as a justification for invasion of his country. And he stressed that he also condemned any Soviet invasion of Poland.

Moreover, Leiken notes that the two major Salvadoran guerrilla groups are critical of the Cuban influence in Managua. In answer to the common argument that one cannot negotiate with the left because the Marxist-Leninists have the guns, Leiken notes that it is the groups with the most troops that control two-thirds of the guerrilla fighting forces (the RN and the ERP), who "stand at the greatest distance from the Soviet Union." But Leiken notes warily that the Reagan policy works to offset their attempts at independence; that protracted fighting and a policy of militarization will only draw these groups closer to both the Nicaraguans and the Cubans.

Revolutionary movements in our hemisphere, Leiken maintains, do not necessarily have to be linked to Soviet expansionism. They now support negotiations because they are linked with popular Salvadoran organizations that desire peace.

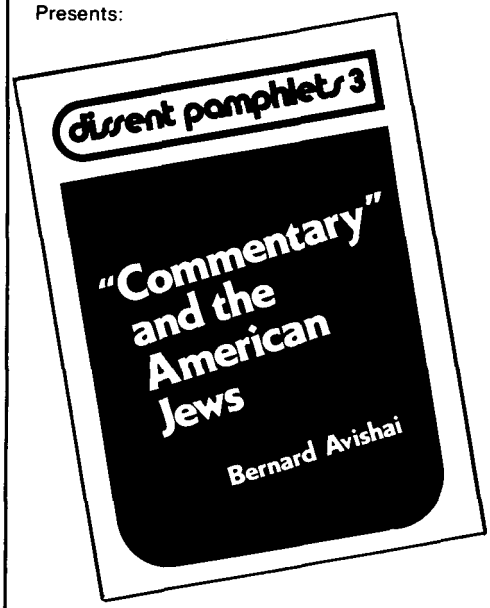
Pluralism is possible, in other words, because a balance of power exists to assure its continuation. In El Salvador, a political solution does not have to award the guerrillas a monopoly of political and military power. But Leiken warns:

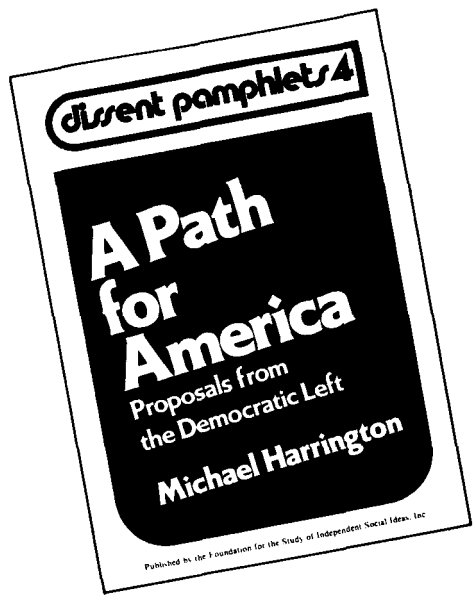
> Over the past decade, U.S. policy makers have learned to distinguish leftism, even some varieties of Marxism . . . from Sovietism. However, they have been reluctant to do so in the U.S. "backyard." This distinction will have to be made if the U.S. is to live peaceably with its southern neighbors. By ignoring this distinction and by its wholesale opposition to the entire Central American Left, U.S. policy pushes the non-aligned Left into the arms of those who are pro-Soviet.

As in 1948, this lesson is not one that Washington seems capable of learning. □

The Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc.

Presents:




dissent pamphlets 4
A Path for America
Proposals from the Democratic Left
Michael Harrington
Published by the Foundation for the Study of Independent Social Ideas, Inc

3 is reprinted from *Dissent*, Spring 1981, and was there entitled "Breaking Faith."

ORDER FROM F.S.I.S.I.

521 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017

$1.25 per copy; $1.00 in bundles of 2 or more (for the same pamphlet). Two separate pamphlets $2.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FALL dissent 1983

EDITORS:
Irving Howe
Michael Walzer

MANAGING EDITOR:
Edith H. Tarcov

BUSINESS MANAGER:
Simone Plastrik

EDITORIAL BOARD:
Bernard Avishai
David Bensman
Marshall Berman
H. Brand
David Bromwich
Joseph Buttinger
Luther Carpenter
Jack Clark
Joseph Clark
Jean L. Cohen
Lewis Coser
Rose Laub Coser
Bogdan Denitch
George Eckstein
Cynthia F. Epstein
Emanuel Geltman
Michael Harrington
Murray Hausknecht
Robert Heilbroner
Erazim Kohák
William Kornblum
Jeremy Larner
Robert Lekachman
Mark Levinson
Norman Mailer
Deborah Meier
Martin Peretz
Jack Rader
Ronald Radosh
Bernard Rosenberg
James Rule
Meyer Schapiro
Brendan Sexton
Patricia Cayo Sexton
Ronnie Steinberg
Peter Steinfels
Dennis Wrong

403
AT FIRST GLANCE *by Ronald Radosh*

COMMENTS AND OPINIONS

407
REAGANOMICS: IS IT FINALLY WORKING?
by Thomas E. Weisskopf . . .
POWER CHIC AS STYLE AND POLITICS *by Nicolaus Mills . . .*
THE BLACKS, REAGANISM, AND 1984
by Jack Greenberg . . .
SPAIN, THE U.S., AND LATIN AMERICA *by Benjamin Martin . . .*
ANYONE FOR A LOVELY LITTLE WAR? *by Marvin E. Rozen*

THE STATE OF THE UNIONS

420
A TALK WITH OWEN BIEBER OF THE UAW
with B. J. Widick . . .
AFSCME VICTORY IN CALIFORNIA *by David Kusnet*

ARTICLES

426
"LABOUR ISN'T WORKING": THE STATE OF THE BRITISH LABOUR MOVEMENT *by D. A. N. Jones*

434
THE ASCENDANCY OF THE RIGHT *by Walter Dean Burnham*

442
THE VOICE OF REBECCA WEST

448
CENSORSHIP & STATE-OWNED CITIZENS *by George Konrád*

456
TRAGEDY ON THE WEST BANK *by Yehuda Litani*

473
A FEASIBLE VISION OF SOCIALISM *by Robert Heilbroner*
. . . WITH A WORD FROM ALEC NOVE

481
THE POLITICS OF MICHEL FOUCAULT *by Michael Walzer*

491
THE NEW CLASS: DOES IT EXIST?
1. SKEPTICAL THOUGHTS ABOUT A FASHIONABLE THEORY
by Dennis Wrong
2. SKEPTICAL THOUGHTS FROM ANOTHER DIRECTION
by Jean L. Cohen

505
A SORCERER IN SEARCH OF SOURCES:
THE WIZARDRY OF GEORGE GILDER *by Norman Waitzman*

NOTEBOOK

509
CUBA: REFLECTIONS ON A REVOLUTION
by Silvia Pedraza-Bailey

BOOKS

513
REVIEWS *by Gus Tyler, Emanuel Geltman, Carol O'Cleireacain, Mitchell Cohen, Robert Leiter*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

With the ominous year of 1984 just around the calendar, Irving Howe has gathered a wide range of distinguished contributors to examine the historical, political and intellectual problems that gave rise to Orwell's great book. With viewpoints spanning the gamut of serious opinion in the United States, they offer a fresh and provocative analysis of *1984* and the ideas it spawned, and the problems raised by the course of totalitarianism since it first appeared.

Part I—The Book and the Writer

Irving Howe 1984: Enigmas of Power
Mark Crispin Miller The Fate of *1984*
Elaine Hoffman Baruch "The Golden Country": Sex and Love in *1984*
Bernard Avishai Orwell and the English Language
Luther Carpenter *1984* on Staten Island

Part II—Ideas

Robert C. Tucker Does Big Brother Exist?
Michael Walzer On "Failed Totalitarianism"
Leszek Kolakowski Totalitarianism and the Virtue of the Lie
Milovan Djilas The Disintegration of Leninist Totalitarianism
Johanno Strasser *1984*: Decade of the Experts?
James B. Rule *1984*—The Ingredients of Totalitarianism
Robert Nisbet *1984* and the Conservative Imagination

Part III—History

Richard Lowenthal Beyond Totalitarianism

IRVING HOWE

EDITOR

A Perennial Library paperback original from
Harper & Row **10 East 53d Street • New York, NY 10022**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Thomas E. Weisskopf

Reaganomics: Is It Finally Working?

We have heard much in recent months about the long-awaited recovery of the U.S. economy. After four years of virtual stagnation, the economic news out of Washington has been decidedly upbeat since this spring. The stock market began to surge late last summer, anticipating some improvement in the economy; but it wasn't until this year that hard economic data first showed evidence of an upturn. Industrial output began to rise, housing starts increased, new unemployment claims slackened, and—as some of the millions of laid-off workers were recalled to their jobs—the overall rate of unemployment finally began to descend from its postwar peak of 10.8 percent in December 1982.

One of the biggest causes for celebration in Washington has been the evidence on the growth of real (inflation-corrected) GNP, the most comprehensive measure of the total output of the economy. From its depressed level in the fourth quarter of 1982, real GNP increased at a modest annual rate of 2.6 percent to the first quarter of 1983 and then accelerated at an annual rate of 9.2 percent in the second quarter. On the basis of all this encouraging news, the Administration economists have revised upward their projections for GNP growth in 1983 and announced that the U.S. economy is well on its way back to good health.

Perhaps even more heartening for the Reagan administration has been the return of the overall unemployment rate to a single-digit level. Reaganomics, given the time needed to overcome the mess inherited from decades of profligacy in Washington, was finally delivering on its promise. The Council of Economic Advisers forecast steadily increasing output, steadily declining unemployment, and relatively stable prices through the end of 1988 (not incidentally, the end of a possible second term for the Reagan administration).

Confronted with this onslaught of rising indicators and official self-congratulation, what can critics of Reaganomics say? Is it possible that the right-wing ideologues were right all along, if not about matters of the heart, then at least about the functioning of a capitalist economy? To be sure, we can point to the human toll exacted by the Reagan strategy for recovery. The GNP growth envisaged for the coming years will in no way make up for the huge losses in employment and output that resulted from the previous three years of "belt-tightening" imposed by the president and his economic chief executive, Paul Volcker of the Federal Reserve Board. Moreover, the benefits of whatever GNP growth now ensues will clearly flow much more profusely to the rich than to the poor, many of whom are projected (even by the Administration) to remain unemployed for years to come. Poor and middle-income classes both will continue to suffer from cutbacks in essential government programs that are to promote health, education, housing, and the environment. And much of the economy's increased output will be devoured by the mushrooming U.S. military machine.

All this is true. And it must be repeated, lest anyone forget what kind of an economy the Reagan administration is trying to build. But there is no denying the fact that we critics are on rather vulnerable, if virtuous, ground if we have to concede that the Reagan economic strategy has succeeded on its own terms. For if the U.S. economy really does take off into a sustained economic boom—comparable, let us say, to the Kennedy–Johnson boom of the 1960's—then the economic welfare of many Americans will no doubt improve, and right-wing economic policies are likely to find much favor with the electorate. Barring a major foul-up in other policy areas (surely a distinct possibility), Reagan will be a heavy favorite to win that second term and, like Maggie Thatcher, be in a much stronger position to reshape the contours of the economy and society.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Examining the Evidence on the Upturn

BUT WILL THIS really come to pass? A closer look at the evidence on the recent upturn in the U.S. economy casts serious doubt upon this scenario. Certainly, the economy is now trending upward; but after so long a period of stagnation, it would be much more surprising if there were no sign of recovery. Six times before, since 1948, the U.S. economy has weathered a recession and emerged with an upward thrust. (I am excluding the aborted minirecovery in 1981, which was sandwiched between two recessions during the past four years of overall stagnation.) To put the current upturn in its proper perspective, we should compare it with the performance of the economy at comparable stages of past upturns.

Such a comparison yields the following interesting results.

- The (annual) rate of growth of real GNP during the first two quarters of the current upturn was 5.6 percent; the corresponding average rate for the six previous upturns was 8.5 percent.

- The growth rate of nonfarm business productivity during the first quarter of the current upturn was 4.8 percent (figures for the second quarter were not available at the time of writing); the corresponding average for the six previous upturns was 9.1 percent.

- The percentage-point decline of the unemployment rate in the first six months since its cyclical peak was 0.8 percent (from 10.8 percent); the corresponding average for the six previous upturns was 1.2 percent (from a substantially lower average rate of 7.3 percent).

It is evident from these figures that the current upturn is a relatively weak one. The 5.6 percent two-quarter growth rate in real GNP was actually lower than the corresponding rate (6.1 percent) recorded during the first two quarters of the aborted minirecovery in 1981. And the projected growth rate for real GNP over the first full year of recovery in 1983—5.5 percent—is well below the average—7.9 percent—for the six previous recoveries.

Such figures raise real questions about the solidity of the upturn, notwithstanding all the optimism in Washington. The evidence is particularly telling because, after such a long period of stagnation, one might reasonably have expected a very strong recovery once the economy did finally turn around. Instead, what we are experiencing is a rather slow improvement in the overall economic situation—so slow that even the Administration's own forecasters do not anticipate that the unemployment rate will decline to its previous cyclical low point—5.8 percent in 1979—by the end of 1988!

Continuing Structural Weaknesses

MORE SIGNIFICANT than the slow pace of the upturn are some important signs of fundamental weakness. First of all, the rate of investment in new plant and equipment—a critical factor for long-term economic growth—is projected to *decrease* (in real terms) by 3.1 percent from 1982 to 1983, after having declined by 5.5 percent from 1981 to 1982. The Reagan administration's huge and well-publicized tax cuts, designed to shift resources into the hands of those who would save and invest, so far have yielded a declining harvest of new capital formation!

A second sign of fundamental weakness is that interest rates remain relatively high, despite so low a rate of utilization of the economy's overall productive capacity that in past years it would have brought rates down sharply. The real long-term rate of interest (as measured by the prime rate charged by banks to corporate borrowers, adjusted for the rate of inflation to reflect more truly the cost of borrowing) has been close to 6 percent all year and shows little sign of declining. By comparison, this real rate averaged around 2 percent (and never reached even 4 percent) from the end of World War II until 1979, when Paul Volcker imposed the Fed's new tight-money policy with a vengeance. The problem with such a high rate is that it discourages capital investment, especially in projects with long-run rather than short-run payoffs. It also does great damage to industries—such as home-building and automobiles—where much of the consumer demand has to be financed through loans.

The failure of long-term interest rates to fall is in turn related to another sign of basic weakness in the U.S. economy—the impending "out-year" federal government budget deficits. Thanks to the generous (to the well-to-do) tax cuts implemented by the Reagan administration, and the lack of any comparable cuts in overall federal spending, record-setting budget deficits have become a routine annual occurrence. This in itself is not a matter for great concern when the economy is operating at its current low level, for the deficit then plays a salutary Keynesian role. (Indeed, to the extent that we are now actually experiencing a recovery, it has largely come about because of Reagan's unacknowledged application of old-fashioned "military

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Keynesianism.") However, as is widely recognized, such deficits pose a major problem if and when the economy heats up, for the resultant government borrowing will then compete with other claims on the economy—notably those of private-sector consumers and investors. The natural result is a resurgence of inflation, and it is the anticipation of just such inflationary pressures that is keeping long-term interest rates so high.

THE CONTINUING STRUCTURAL WEAKNESS of the U.S. economy can perhaps best be summarized in terms of the so-called Phillips Curve, whose instability since the late 1960s has at once been the bane of orthodox macroeconomists and a compelling indicator of the growing ill-health of the U.S. economy. The Phillips Curve plots the rate of inflation against the rate of unemployment. Its downward slope depicts the typically inverse relationship between these two basic indicators: an increase in the unemployment rate is associated with a decrease in inflation, and vice versa.

From the early 1950s until the late '60s there was a relatively stable Phillips Curve relationship in the U.S. economy. In 1954–68 the unemployment rate oscillated between 3 percent and 7 percent, while the inflation rate oscillated inversely between 5 percent and 1 percent. This represented a quite tolerable trade-off; a low unemployment rate could be achieved without much inflation. But with the downturn of 1969–70 and the subsequent recovery in 1973, the Phillips Curve shifted distinctly outward. During this period there remained, as always, a trade-off between unemployment and inflation, but the rate of inflation averaged about three percentage points higher than before for any given rate of unemployment. Then, with the downturn of 1974–75 and the subsequent recovery to 1979, the Phillips Curve shifted out even further; the rate of inflation averaged another four percentage points higher for any given rate of unemployment. This represented "stagflation" to an acute degree: even with an unemployment rate as high as 7 percent and lots of idle capacity, the economy still generated an inflation rate of about 8 percent; and any effort to reduce the unemployment rate much below 7 percent would set off double-digit inflation.

This was the lame economy that the Reagan administration (with the critical assistance of Paul Volcker at the Fed) sought to heal with a mixture of supply-side and monetarist ministrations. In extending the downturn of 1979–80 into four years of virtual stagnation, their intent was not simply to purchase a lower rate of inflation at the cost of an ever higher rate of unemployment. Rather, they sought to shift the whole Phillips Curve inward—believing that a sustained period of tight money and depressed economic activity would ultimately lay the basis for an inflation-free recovery. But if we look at the evidence for the years 1980–82, and add the Administration's own projections for 1983, we find that the Phillips Curve has shifted—if at all—even further outward since the late 1970s. To be sure, the rate of inflation has been brought down to about 5 percent; but only because the rate of unemployment has gone well over 10 percent. Any real gains on the Phillips Curve front remain to be realized. To this point the Reagan administration has merely demonstrated the macroeconomic truth that if you are willing to push up unemployment high enough, you can eventually curb inflation.

This brief review of the structural weaknesses of the U.S. economy suggests that the problems that began to plague the economy in the late 1960s are still very much with us. Either the current recovery will have to remain a relatively weak one, bringing small gains on the unemployment front, or—if it picks up speed—it will soon regenerate the kind of inflationary pressures that characterized the decade of the 1970s. These pressures would once again tempt government policy-makers to fight inflation with higher unemployment, and we would be back in the stagnation-inflation spiral once again.

What Can Be Done?

THE KEY TO ESCAPING from the stagnation-inflation spiral implied by the present position of the Phillips Curve is to promote a more rapid rate of growth of productivity (output per hour of work). It is no accident that the successive outward shifts of the Phillips Curve since the late 1960s have coincided precisely with successive slowdowns in nonfarm business productivity growth in the U.S. economy: from an annual rate of 2.6 percent between 1948 and 1966 to rates of 2.1 percent, 0.7 percent, and 0.2 percent during the periods 1966–73, 1973–79, and 1979–82 respectively. Rapid productivity growth enables the economy to meet the rapidly growing claims on output associated with a high-employment regime without a buildup of inflationary pressures, which typically result from an excess of claims relative to the available output.

The importance of rapid productivity growth to a capitalist economy has not been lost on the Reagan administration economists. Indeed, they have sought to justify their policies of redistribution from poor to rich on the grounds that invest-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment would thereby be favored over consumption, and investment would be the key to stepped-up productivity growth. Investment is indeed one of the critical means by which productivity growth can be stimulated (although by no means the only one).

The problem with the Reaganomic approach to boosting investment is not only that it is inequitable but also that it is simply counterproductive. In the period 1979–82, when Volcker and later Reagan were fighting inflation and seeking to curb wage growth and boost profits by means of monetary restrictiveness and high unemployment, they kept the economy operating at such a low level of overall capacity utilization that potential investors had no incentive to increase their capacity through new capital formation. Now that the rate of capacity utilization is rising again as the economy begins its upturn, the incentive to invest should eventually return. When it does, however, investors will confront a different problem—a high cost of borrowing investable funds that is signaled by high real-interest rates and caused by the need of the federal government to borrow funds in order to finance its whopping budget deficits.

These deficits, in turn, are attributable to the Reagan administration's insistence on granting huge tax cuts to the rich, as well as its determination to step up the rate of military spending, without being able to cut other forms of government spending in any comparable way. It proved relatively easy to cut back on programs for the poor, but it was quite another matter to curb the far more substantial government expenditures on programs—such as Social Security—whose primary beneficiaries are of the middle- and even upper-income classes.

HOW, THEN, can productivity growth be stimulated? Insofar as new capital formation is to contribute to the process, it will be essential to divert potentially investable funds from some of the other uses for which they will be claimed as the economy heats up again. In particular, the federal deficits will have to be drastically reduced in order to keep the government from absorbing a large proportion of the available credit. Two promising ways to go about this deficit-reduction process are to curb military spending and to reimpose the taxes that the Reagan administration has lifted from the shoulders of the well-to-do.

Tax breaks for the rich and for their corporations do little to promote investment if the government has to borrow back the money given up in taxes. But if budget deficits and high interest rates can be avoided in an expansionary period, the lower cost of capital and the potential for future profits from new investment will more than outweigh the adverse effect on investors of somewhat higher tax rates.

A second, and perhaps equally important source of improved productivity growth in the future can be found in the area of labor relations and workplace organization. There is increasing evidence that productivity in the U.S. economy has been retarded by an unnecessarily authoritarian structure of workplace organization and an unduly adversarial set of relationships between management and workers. Experiments with greater workplace democracy show considerable promise of both boosting workers' motivation to work and improving managerial performance. Moreover, the now typical structure of corporate organization requires large numbers of supervisory employees, whose direct contribution to output is nil and who could be replaced by productive workers if alternative, more cooperative means were found to assure satisfactory performance on the job. Thus there is good reason to believe that a new "supply-side" policy involving the promotion of economic democracy, rather than economic inequity, would yield a substantial return in productivity growth in the long run.

IN THE SHORT RUN, major gains in both output and productivity growth could be realized by promoting a more rapid recovery than is either expected or desired by the Reagan administration. Increasing productivity without increasing the number of workers employed represents only a very partial improvement; if the benefits of the productivity gains are to be shared among the whole population, it is essential that rapid employment expansion accompany that productivity growth. Moreover, there is evidence that rising rates of capacity utilization provide a positive stimulus to productivity growth. Rather than wait passively until 1988 for a decline of the unemployment rate below 6 percent, what is needed is a more expansionary macropolicy that would aim to reach this goal within a year or two. In the long run such a policy would offset potential inflationary pressures by contributing to a greater availability of output to meet the growing claims. If in the short run inflationary pressures do develop, before the full range of productivity benefits is realized, a temporary and selective program of price controls could and should be introduced; any resulting inefficiencies would be far less wasteful than the losses in output associated with too slow a recovery.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OBVIOUSLY THESE RECOMMENDATIONS, and other potentially fruitful policies that would complement them, will not be adopted by this Administration. A necessary condition is that Reagan (or his successor as the Republican candidate) be defeated in the 1984 presidential election. Whether or not the current upturn does continue apace will clearly have an impact on the election; with a little bit of luck, the Administration economists may be able to continue their celebration of economic recovery for another year. But it is just as possible that by this time next year the economic news will turn sour. In that case the Democrats would clearly stand to gain, as they did from the bad economic news during the congressional election in 1982.

We should not forget, however, that the departure of the Republicans from Washington is only a necessary, but by no means a sufficient, condition for the adoption of a sound and humane economic strategy for recovery. In 1982 the Democrats demonstrated all too vividly their inability to formulate and articulate a promising economic alternative. Unless they are willing to take the political risk of projecting a dramatically new and progressive economic program, the election of 1984 will matter little for the future of our ailing economy.

These observations are based on my joint work with Samuel Bowles and David M. Gordon; our book, *Beyond the Waste Land: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline*, was published in June 1983 by Anchor Press/Doubleday. □

Nicolaus Mills

Power Chic as Style and Politics

A decade ago Tom Wolfe coined the term "radical chic" to describe what he regarded as a trendy identification of the wealthy with the poor. Wolfe's 1970 essay focused on a benefit for the Black Panther party, and what he sought to capture was the incongruity of using a Park Avenue setting to raise money for a "revolutionary" organization. It was not the idea of giving that bothered Wolfe. It was the contradiction that arose when the wealthy turned radical causes into fads.

Radical chic has been replaced in the 1980s by a self-congratulatory aesthetic that celebrates social status. Call it power chic. Where the radical chic of the late 1960s sought identification with the poor, power chic revels in the opposite. It is premised on the belief that the class disparities of American society are *proper* disparities and that even in the midst of a recession it is essential for those with status and wealth to pursue a life-style that rests on the elevation (not merely the enjoyment) of their affluence.

If power chic has a *Baedeker*, it is a magazine such as *Connoisseur*, which, under the editorship of Thomas Hoving, one-time director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, offers monthly instruction in the decorative arts and elegant travel. But power chic is not mere snobbism or the culture conspiracy of a tiny elite. It is part of a much broader counterattack on the declining expectations of the 1980s, as we see when we turn to its most conspicuous examples.

• *Signature architecture*: Here power chic is at the center of a corporate desire for architecture that will allow the public to identify its offices with a prestigious image. The epitome of such architecture is Philip Johnson's new AT&T Building with its pink granite facade, its Chippendale-like pediment, and a 60-foot lobby with arches and windows designed to create a cathedral effect. In terms of power chic as design, it is difficult to imagine a greater success. Neither energy efficiency nor modernism has been allowed to get in the way. Johnson's AT&T headquarters are the embodiment of corporate might, monumental proof that AT&T knows how to make its weight felt.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

• *Urban gentrification:* In this case power chic manifests itself in the hegemony it claims for good taste. The upper middle class is given the right (with city encouragement and tax relief) to take over run-down neighborhoods possessing good housing stock because it can fix up the neighborhoods in a way the poor who used to live there cannot. What happens to the displaced poor? That is not a question gentrification is concerned with. Its justification is the "improvement" it creates.

• *The textured film:* Once a staple of such sophisticated explorations of domesticity as *An Unmarried Woman* and *Kramer vs. Kramer,* the textured film with its emphasis on rendering in detail the lives of the affluent is now reaching a whole new viewing public. The success of *Trading Places* is a case in point. Despite its seeming irreverence, it is a virtual paean to power chic. Its comedy rests on our laughing at what happens to a street-hustling black (Eddie Murphy) when he trades places with the manager of a Philadelphia brokerage firm (Dan Aykroyd), and at least half the film is spent showing us upper-class Philadelphia. It is a necessary tour. For in *Trading Places*, as in the current new wave of textured films, there is no story line, unless an audience can be convinced there are worlds in which the surfaces alone are so dazzling that no one would turn down a chance to live in them.

• *Street couture:* Also known as "bag-lady chic," street couture is perhaps the crudest example to date of power chic. It is a style that parodies the dress of the poor with clothes that feature dark colors and carefully tailored rips and holes. As its appearance in stores such as Bendel's and Bloomingdale's indicates, street couture is targeted for a very distinct urban clientele, and the point it makes about fashion and power is no less self-conscious. Those who can afford it, street couture says, can take the style of poverty and convert it into elegance.

WHAT IS MOST TELLING about these examples of power chic is how few claims they make for being truly original. The best of power chic, Philip Johnson's AT&T headquarters, moves back in time (like Cass Gilbert's 1913 Woolworth Building) and borrows from cathedral architecture to achieve corporate awe. The worst of power chic, street couture, is content with taking from the present. It co-opts what punk dress, with its emphasis on rips and dark colors, did several years ago for a less

From Andrei Zh. to Norman P. or The Higher Literary Criticism

I

Mikhail Zoshchenko takes absolutely no interest in the labor of the Soviet people, their struggles and heroism, their high social and moral qualities. With him this theme is always absent. Zoshchenko, like the Philistine and vulgarian that he is, chose as his permanent theme digging into the basest and pettiest sides of life. . . . Only the dregs of literature could produce such "works." . . .

It is not for us to reform our life and our social order, according to Zoshchenko. Let him reform. But he does not want to reform. Let him get out of Soviet literature. In Soviet literature there can be no place for putrid, empty, vulgar, and ideologically indifferent works.

He depicts Soviet people as loafers and monsters, as stupid and crude people. . . . He is incapable of finding in the life of the Soviet people one positive thing, one positive figure. . . . Zoshchenko habitually mocks at Soviet life, Soviet institutions, Soviet people. . . .

□

The subject-matter of Akhmatova is individualistic to the core. Her poetry is poverty-stricken—the poetry of a frantic little lady, rushing back and forth between the boudoir and the chapel. Basic with her are amorous-erotic motifs, interlaced with motifs of sadness, anguish, death, mysticism, and doom. . . . Not quite a nun and not quite a whore but rather a whore and a nun in whom fornication is mingled with prayer.

Such is Akhmatova with her petty, narrow personal life, her trivial emotional experiences and her religious-mystical eroticism. . . . Moods of loneliness and hopelessness, alien to Soviet literature, characterize the entire historical course of the "creative genius" of Akhmatova. . . .

What has this poetry in common with the interests of our people and state? Nothing whatsoever. Akhmatova's creative genius belongs to the distant past. It is alien to the realities of contemporary Soviet life. . . .

— From a speech by ANDREI ZHDANOV, August 21, 1946, at the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, cited in *The Country of the Blind* by George S. Counts and Nucia Lodge, 1949.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

affluent class. That power chic should take so little interest in originality is not, however, a sign of diffidence. On the contrary, for power chic to be significantly original would be counterproductive. What it is out to draw attention to is not innovation but elevation: the ability of status to compel the sort of recognition nothing else can.

For power chic, the self-imposed rules of success are so rigid that in the end anticompassion is the only ethic it can afford to be governed by. The differences in status power chic is bent on magnifying cannot come into being if empathy for the unsuccessful is allowed to get in the way. The couple gentrifying a decaying brownstone will not get the brownstone (or mortgage money) unless they displace the poor who have been living in it. Street couture is without wit unless the joke it makes at the expense of actual bag ladies is recognized. Even a popular film such as *Trading Places* fails unless the street hustles of Eddie Murphy are seen as the comic equivalent of the upper-class machinations of Dan Aykroyd.

In past decades we have, of course, heard similar claims for the virtues of luxury. The idea that "living well is the best revenge" is as old as the expatriate heyday of the 1920s. The difference is that power chic has a political side that "living well" never did in the era of Harding and Coolidge. In the 1980s power chic is presidential politics.

The relationship between the two is apparent in the symbols of the Reagan administration: a president who enjoys being photographed in jodhpurs, a first lady preoccupied with White House china, a Veterans' administrator who decorates his office at a cost of $50,000, a Treasury Department that spends almost $60,000 on chauffeur overtime. But what is most crucial about the Reagan administration's version of power chic is that it does not stop at symbols. It has taken to heart, like no American government in the last half-century, the job of elevating the differences between haves and have-nots. Tax breaks for the rich, bail-outs for corporations, and deregulation, on the one hand; on the other, cuts in aid to education, food stamps, and job training.

A year ago Robert Reich, writing in the *New Republic,* described these Reagan policies as the return of Social Darwinism, but in 1983 even the concept of a neo-Social Darwinism does not offer an adequate account of Reaganomics and their appeal. The Reagan administration is not merely saying that in the American competitive jungle the

II

In the early 1950s, when the reputation of [Henry] Adams had fallen in proportion to the new (and short-lived) enthusiasm among literary intellectuals for "our country and our culture," Lionel Trilling cautioned against reading "Adams permanently out of our intellectual life." Trilling acknowledged that there was much to be said against Adams—and he himself said it all—but there were moments when we needed him:

> We are at one with Adams whenever our sense of the American loneliness and isolation becomes especially strong, whenever we feel that our culture belongs to everyone except ourselves and our friends, whenever we believe that our talents and our devotion are not being sufficiently used.

This is an acute diagnosis of Adams's appeal, but there is another way of putting the same point. Thus one can say that Adams has been kept alive as an incitement to and a justification of the hunger of the American intellectual class for the power, and especially the political power, that he himself, for all that he denigrated it, could never stop wanting and envying. The life of the mind was never enough for Adams, and if he is an exemplary figure, what he exemplifies is the self-hatred so many American writers and thinkers have felt over being "mere" intellectuals, and the self-pity they have experienced over what they have taken to be their own powerlessness.

The great irony is that the case of Adams—who remains a force when the names of Rutherford B. Hayes or Chester Arthur are scarcely even remembered—demonstrates how much more powerful intellectuals can be in the long run than even the most successful of politicians. This does not, however, mean that Adams is a force for good. On the contrary, in encouraging a bigoted contempt for this country and in subtly denigrating and devaluing the life of the mind, he has exerted so malignant an influence that, unlike Trilling, I see little of value that would be lost by allowing him to slip into the obscurity he so often boasted of wishing to achieve. . . .

—Norman Podhoretz, in the *New Criterion,* June 1983 □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poor go on being poor because they are unproductive. Its ethic of anticompassion is more deeply rooted than that. Its real argument is that in a period of economic contraction the nation works best if the poor remain poor and the struggling middle class continues on an economic tightrope. The Reagan cuts—particularly those involving loans for college students, food supplements for pregnant mothers, job training for young blacks—are not designed to promote an economic race in which the competitors have an equal start any more than its massive budget is designed for austerity. The Reagan cuts are made in order to be sure there is money available for those at the top of the economic ladder, who are the major beneficiaries of its programs.

It is the lure of inequity the Reagan administration is selling, and it is in this commitment that its relationship to power chic is most intense. As 1984 approaches, Reagan policy seems in fact likely to need, as never before, the imagery and gloss of power chic for the constituency it requires to remain in office. Certainly nothing else, neither a belief in classic laissez-faire nor a genuine conservatism, will do. For what is being proposed by this Administration is that in an economy of declining expectations the poor must take even less so that others, already better off, may have more. □

Jack Greenberg

The Blacks, Reaganism, and 1984

Affirmative action, school integration, black economic status, the Reagan administration's attack on civil rights, and the exercise of black political power: these are some of the matters that now concern the civil rights community. Together, they may suggest a picture of meaningless Brownian movement. Some think that years ago issues were crisper, progress was achieved more readily. In fact, however, civil rights issues always have been difficult and complex. Indeed, it might be argued that today they converge so that legal and political questions bear a comprehensible relationship to one another. We may, as a result, be on the verge of critical black political involvement.

First, it may be useful to dispel the myth that in the past things were easier and simpler for civil rights advocates. *Brown* vs. *Board of Education* (1954) resolved what today can be stated as a simple question only after a quarter-century courtroom campaign. That issue was whether state-imposed segregation in education should be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. In the 1940s and '50s, however, there was great uncertainty about the outcome (*Brown* was argued three times). We forget how deeply rooted were the obstacles of federalism, which stood as a barrier to invalidating state laws; the iron grip the South held on Congress; the depth of racial prejudice, and fear of precipitating racial violence. As if to manifest the substance underlying these fears, Little Rock and other communities staged insurrections, Congress came within a hair's breadth of incapacitating the federal courts, "Impeach Earl Warren" movements erupted, and very little school integration took place until the early 1970s.

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s early crusade, which focused on voting rights and public accommodations, seems uncomplicated today: apartheid was wrong, the demonstrations were right. But President Kennedy, fearing violence and promising corrective legislation, attempted to persuade the Freedom Riders not to ride. Others, opposed to discrimination in theory, objected to trespass on private property, asserting that law enforced in neutral fashion required convicting sit-in demonstrators and that peaceful demonstrations provoked violence. A few of the demonstrators were indeed violent or had short tempers.

As the '60s progressed, Vietnam issues mingled with civil rights concerns created enormous tensions and confusion. Nevertheless, the great civil rights legislation of the '60s emerged from this situation and became the basis of the rights of blacks, other minorities, and women today. Whether the laws would be enacted, however, was uncertain. Then the assassination of John Kennedy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and Martin Luther King, Jr. provided impetus without which these laws would not have been adopted at the times they were. Some leading proponents of civil rights opposed the Equal Employment Opportunities Act, fearing it would bring down the entire effort. Opponents introduced coverage of sex discrimination to defeat the bill. But it was enacted and has become the legal mainstay of the civil rights and women's rights movements.

THIS RECITATION of happy endings following crises and uncertainties is hardly set forth to argue that everything turns out for the best. But it does suggest that issues of race have been at least as deep and difficult in the past as they are now and that, nevertheless, progress has been made. If there is a center of gravity to the racial issues of today, it is to be found in the policies of the Reagan administration. Its economic policies have hurt racial minorities. In its social policies, it has fought blacks and other minority groups virtually every inch of the way. In part this stems from the Administration's perception that there is political advantage in fighting against affirmative action and school busing, two controversial civil rights remedies.

The Administration also has taken anti-civil rights positions that have been quite unpopular, suggesting a commitment deeper than expediency. It withheld support from reenactment of the Voting Rights Act in a form that would have made it effective until reenactment by overwhelming majorities was certain. President Reagan restored tax exemption to segregated schools from which the Internal Revenue Service had removed it, provoking enormous public outrage; this was followed by a Supreme Court decision in the *Bob Jones* case, which thoroughly repudiated what the president had ordered. At this writing, he has attempted to depose three members of the Civil Rights Commission with whose views he disagrees on busing and affirmative action, precipitating bitter opposition in the Congress and from civil rights advocates. Indeed, so antagonistic has the Administration been to black aspirations that some believe it has offended white moderates. In late July, the Department of Justice and the White House engaged in a spate of pro-civil rights activity—including a lawsuit against Alabama's higher education system, and advocating a fair housing bill—which civil rights groups claim was designed to combat this impression.

The hostility that Administration civil rights positions engender in the minority community comes at a time when blacks are registering and voting more than ever before and may be poised on the edge of a quantum jump in their political participation. To some extent, at least in the South, this is a function of the Voting Rights Act. Even in the North, the Voting Rights Act (as in New York) and constitutional principles of one-man one-vote facilitate fuller black participation. And in the North the example of what has happened in the South has been important. But more significant, I think, may be the fact that the Administration's attack on affirmative action is aimed at that part of the black community that is most advantageously situated and most capable of fighting back.

Despite opposition by a few conservative black economists and writers, most blacks support affirmative action because growing numbers of them have higher education and professional and managerial positions as a result of it.

IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT that the proposal for a black presidential candidacy becomes interesting. Undoubtedly, black candidacies have been the greatest single factor in bringing out large numbers of black voters. The experience in Chicago—where Harold Washington's candidacy increased the black registration from about 400,000 to over 700,000—is the most striking example. If a comparable increase in registration could be achieved elsewhere, the increase in black votes could far surpass majorities by which Ronald Reagan carried a perhaps critical number of states. Were this attempted by a black candidate running for president, it would, however, present some downside risks as well. It might stimulate an increase in registration of whites opposed to minority aspirations; it might split the liberal vote in the primaries, thereby assuring the selection of a conservative white candidate; it might split the Democratic vote in the election, assuring the victory of the Republican candidate.

Assuming that, in the primaries, a black candidate won an important number of delegates, he or she might be in a position to negotiate at the convention to assure the ultimate selection of a nominee committed to positions the black candidate advocated. And there is no more need for a black candidate, defeated in the primaries, to run as a candidate in the general election than there is for a defeated white. The Democratic candidate in this election surely will be white, and so he will not attract the same degree of antiblack animus that, for example, was directed against Harold Washington in Chicago.

The vagaries of the primary process are so numerous that there is no way of telling whether, in the last analysis, a more or less conservative Demo-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cratic candidate would be selected if one of the principal players were black. But, in any event, any Democratic candidate would be in a position to benefit—possibly enough to achieve election—from the increased black registration. And any Democratic position on racial issues would be more congenial to minorities than those of the present Administration.

Late in June I attended a meeting in Birmingham with civil rights lawyers and community activists interested in removing barriers to voting in the South and in a black presidential candidacy. The meeting of over a hundred persons was called on short notice, and the people who attended were busy, important figures in their communities. Nevertheless, the acceptance rate was extremely high and there was a kind of electricity in the air, a kind of tension and energy that I have not seen since the days of the "movement" in the '60s. To me it suggested that an effort to get out the vote, perhaps centered on a black presidential candidacy, would be very successful.

While politics is at center-stage, supportive legal action to prevent the undoing of the gains of the past with regard to schools, affirmative action, and other questions is also being fought hard. Civil rights lawsuits to eliminate barriers to voting will be particularly important throughout the South. Burdensome registration procedures (for instance, many Mississippi voters must register twice) are impediments to the unregistered—that is, to blacks.

The mix of other civil rights issues and the way to resolve them now presents varying degrees of difficulty, especially in face of attacks by the Department of Justice. Nevertheless, civil rights lawyers and their supporters in Congress, so far, virtually have held the line. The economic issues, however, will be determined in large part by the political struggle. Because of all these challenges, the coming election may see a new, high level of minority political participation. A political breakthrough may move the quest for equal treatment to a new plateau. □

Benjamin Martin

Spain, the U.S., and Latin America

Since taking office last December, Spain's new Socialist government has accorded foreign policy a central role. This signifies quite a turnabout. For, ever since the beginning of this century—excepting the Civil War of the 1930s—Spain has been rather a passive witness than a participant on the international scene. The disrepute of the Franco dictatorship consigned the country to still greater, enforced international isolation, which was partly alleviated in the '50s, when it submitted to a client-state relationship with the United States. More recently, in the years of post-Franco democratization, 1976–82, an overwhelming preoccupation with the new parliamentary structure and domestic problems—together with the fact that for the last two of those years an increasingly indecisive center-right government held office—resulted in further neglect of most foreign-policy issues.

Much of the new Spanish activism is sparked by Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, who has a thorough and exceptional grounding in foreign-policy matters. Over the past four years, "Felipe" has been serving as vice-chair of the Socialist International, charged with the direction of its activities in Latin America.

SPAIN'S NEW FOREIGN-POLICY APPROACH has a three-pronged thrust:

(1) To gain recognition as a full-fledged participant in European affairs through entry in the Common Market. (A related matter, what sort of conditional collaboration in the Western defense system the government should institute, is now under study.)

(2) A recasting of the relationship with the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

United States, with Spain taking a more assertive position in the context of relatively friendly relations.

(3) A concerted strengthening of the ties with Latin America.

Spain's prospect of gaining early entry into the Common Market seems to be slim. The best that can be expected is a lengthy, piecemeal accession that may start in 1984 and will progress through '85 and '86. For this reason Spain's role in Latin America is receiving redoubled attention.

The reestablishment of links with Spanish-speaking America is obviously motivated, first of all, by a desire to expand Spain's economic influence in that region—but also by an old sense of ethnic, cultural, and political solidarity. The nebulous concept of *"hispanismo"*—exalting the spiritual and cultural links of Spanish America to the *patria madre*—has been touted periodically by writers and intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic. It has, however, never amounted to much, because Spain's society was in decline, incapable of furnishing the needed economic and technological assistance. So far, it was rarely more than a self-serving doctrine charged with ethnocentric arrogance. The Franco regime used *hispanismo* to break out of its international isolation: it established close ties with such Latin-American leaders as the Peróns, Somoza, Trujillo, and Pérez Jiménez. More recently, the center-right government of Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo, which preceded the present Socialist administration, purposely kept the Spanish presence in Latin America low key in order to avoid clashes with the Reagan administration.

Now the Socialist government of a democratic Spain seeks to strengthen the traditional ties by support for democratic development, human rights, and the struggle for social justice. The government's Institute for Ibero-American Cooperation, headed by Luis Yañez, a prominent colleague of Gonzalez, recently had its budget doubled. Latin America, it should be recalled, contains thousands of Spanish nationals, and countless local nationals with family ties to Spain. Spain now also has become a major haven for Latin Americans of a democratic persuasion; at least 100,000, many of them refugees, now reside in Spain. And Latin American writers, painters, and political leaders are frequent visitors to Madrid and Barcelona. Shortly after returning from Stockholm where he had received the Nobel Prize for Literature, Gabriel García Márquez headed for Madrid to congratulate Felipe Gonzalez upon being elected prime minister.

WASHINGTON POLICY-MAKERS view Spain's increasing involvement with the countries south of our border with some concern. The two governments have put forward drastically different solutions for dealing with the violence that is engulfing Central America. The Spaniards feel they must assume a leading role in negotiations and peace-making efforts, and Gonzalez's background for this task indeed is most helpful. Before becoming prime minister, in the years 1980–81, as the Socialist International's policy-directing vice-chair, he spent considerable time searching for a formula to end the civil war in El Salvador, and since then has been on cordial terms with most Central American and Caribbean political leaders.

Prime Minister Gonzalez's official visit to Washington this June was seen in Madrid as a crucial element in legitimizing Spain's role in Central American peace-making efforts. Madrid hoped thereby to serve as a valid interlocutor with the U.S. in behalf of a negotiated solution to the Salvadoran conflict.

Shortly before his arrival in Washington, Gonzalez undertook barnstorming visits to the Dominican Republic, and to Columbia, Venezuela, Panama, and Mexico to align Spain with the efforts of the Contadora countries (his visit included all four), which propose to bring an end to the fighting in Central America through negotiations. At each stopover he publicly deplored the "negative" aspects of the present U.S. policy in Latin America.

Surely, this is not the best of times to attempt to persuade the Reagan administration of the error of its ways in Central America. An Administration that has given only lip service to the negotiating part of its "two-track" policy, and that is increasingly committed to military solutions, could not be further removed from what Prime Minister Gonzalez has in mind. Among other things, the Spaniards urge the inclusion of Nicaragua and Cuba in regional peace talks rather than treating them as pariahs. Gonzalez, however, has no illusions. Coming home to Madrid from his last South American tour, he was pessimistic about the possibility of an early end to the violence in Central America.

WHAT OF THE RISKS a small country like Spain runs in opposing the North American colossus? Gonzalez's bid for a role in finding a way out of the Central American morass cannot be easily fobbed off by the United States. He is, after all, also the Socialist International's principal speaker on Latin American questions. During his many visits to the area in recent years he has developed close relations with such leading political figures as the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

presidents of the Dominican Republic and Colombia and with the former presidents of Venezuela and Panama. The Venezuelan Democratic Alliance party is an affiliate of the Socialist International and expected to win the presidential election to be held later this year. Gonzalez was particularly close to Omar Torrijos of Panama, and he is also on good terms with Fidel Castro and the Nicaraguan Sandinists (a Sandinist emissary met with him during his visit to the Dominican Republic).

The State Department has seen the wisdom of meeting with Gonzalez periodically. Both Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger have visited Madrid since the Socialists took office. Thomas Enders, then assistant secretary of state for Latin America, journeyed to Madrid not so long ago in an effort to sell Gonzalez on the Administration's "two-track" policy. But with the more hard-nosed approach that now dominates U.S. policy on Central America, it is uncertain whether Gonzalez will continue to be treated with such deference.

On the surface, relations between Madrid and Washington remain cordial and correct. However irksome the Spanish censure of American policies, the presence of American military bases in Spain and Spain's increasingly conciliatory attitude toward the Atlantic Alliance necessarily impose a posture of benevolent tolerance—especially since our Defense Department is eager for Spain's full integration into NATO. Last December the Socialists, upon taking office, "froze" efforts in this

Marvin E. Rozen

Anyone for a Splendid Little War?

"It's just not fair," said Prendergast to his fellow movers-and-shakers at lunch in the White House Mess. "Margaret Thatcher makes more mistakes and botches the economy even worse than our boss, and because she is lucky enough to fall into a Falklands victory, she is guaranteed to win the next election."

Wheels began to spin in Crawford's head as he exchanged significant glances with his NSC sidekick, Roberts. At the next break in the conversation, Crawford mumbled something about a pile of work and left the Mess. Roberts also excused himself. They got together immediately in Crawford's office.

"You know," Crawford mused, "Prendy can be an impossible ass, but maybe he's hit on something. Nothing like a splendid little war to get the patriotic juices flowing. A little jingoism can rouse flagging spirits and divert attention from our economic miseries. It might be just the thing."

Roberts was pessimistic. "You and I know that manufacturing incidents is risky—look at the Mayaguez and the Iranian hostage rescue attempt. Ford and Carter didn't get many points for their efforts; if anything, they lost.

"Anyway, wouldn't we do better moving in the opposite direction? Ronald Reagan, the Peacemaker—that resonates! We could argue that the hard line has brought the Soviets around; our people may fume but they have nowhere else to go; and we can really tap deeply into that broad middle of the voter spectrum with a peace offensive. After all, look how Nixon manipulated détente and China-recognition for his 1972 victory. Isn't there a message for the old man?"

"Maybe," said Crawford. "But don't forget the old man isn't Nixon. He's got his principles. He really believes in what he says. We'd have to show him how the new twist logically flows from his basic outlook, and that won't be easy. In any case, I don't think the American public would allow him such flexibility. Remember that Tricky Dicky's integrity was discounted anyway, so a pragmatic standard could be applied; but our guy's forte is straight-shooter sincerity."

"O.K.," Roberts said, "I get the point; I'm not going to argue for Carterizing Reagan. But why look for trouble? The economy is getting better. The worst is over; output will be rising, unemployment falling, and prices stabilizing at a relatively low inflation rate. Isn't that our best bet?"

Crawford warmed up to a favorite subject: "Anybody who would believe what economists say is ready for the psycho ward. Those economists—ours as well as theirs—give me the creeps. You can never get a definite answer from them; it's all jargon—maybe, perhaps, and it all depends. You might as well toss a coin!"

Crawford shifted to his more professional mode of discourse. "First and foremost, we have to control media access. Those bastards are always nosing around. They're a pack—with a few exceptions—of knee-jerk liberals anyway. We can't have them roaming freely about. It will have to be an isolated area where we have secure control over communications. Second, it can't be too bloody. Some casualties are necessary to heighten the drama and impart realism, but we sure as hell don't want to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

direction that had begun the preceding May. So far, the Socialist government remains opposed to full integration and is pledged to conduct a popular referendum on whether to remain in the Alliance. But since then Gonzalez's public endorsement of NATO's decision to install Pershing missiles in Europe (though not in Spain) has served to bring the two countries closer together.

Hence, what to do about Gonzalez's increasingly vexatious involvement in Central America when the United States is embarked on a diametrically opposite course? Gonzalez acts the part of leader of a friendly country that wants to help reach a peaceful resolution of the El Salvador civil war. But his role is bound to become ever more unnerving as the Americanization of the conflict proceeds. He has thus far emerged as the champion of the Contadora formula, to which will soon be added the rallying of European support behind Spain's efforts. Preparations now are under way for the launching of joint French-Spanish initiatives in Latin America, one of which—the international situation permitting—involves receiving Castro as an official guest in Paris, Madrid, and Stockholm sometime this fall. Consequently, as the Administration becomes more deeply bogged down in Central America, and with every sign that this will become a major issue in the coming American presidential election campaign, Gonzalez's peacemaking efforts are going to become increasingly uncomfortable for the beleaguered policy-makers in Washington. □

dredge up Vietnam-type memories of interminable stalemate and lots of American boys getting their guts spilled out. Third, timing is essential. For November 1984, it has to start soon enough to be fresh in people's minds and end late enough not to allow time for second thoughts or the inevitable foreign reaction or domestic backlash. Finally, we have to be sure to pick the right target. Sufficiently evil to be a credible heavy—like Idi Amin, Qaddafi, the kind of guy you love to hate . . . ."

Roberts, his face a little flushed now, said, "Sounds exciting. How about Panama and the Canal? The old man might have a soft spot in his heart for that one."

"No, it's been too quiet there since the Treaty; it would look too artificial. Besides, we owe them one for helping us with the Shah, and we're having enough difficulties with the rest of Central America not to open up another can of worms there."

"Cuba . . . ?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure, but it would be too dangerous. Our chicken European friends would never understand; the Russkies might feel compelled to respond; and we're still bound by our 1962 pledge not to invade."

"Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia?"

"Doable, but pretty backwater stuff. The homefolks don't get aroused about Africa. . . . Anyway, it might stir up a hornet's nest among American blacks."

"I've got it—let's topple Khomeini. You can't say every red-blooded American wouldn't clap for that."

"Maybe, but two strikes against it. Too close to the Russkies, and the Middle East is explosive stuff, our control factors are pretty weak there."

"This is going to sound a little wild, but why can't we provoke an incident with the Israelis in Lebanon? A lot of the boys are still pissed about their blowing up the Liberty in the '73 war, and also have had it with Begin and Sharon—they're so goddamned pushy. We can score a lot of points with the Arabs, and the Israelis have nowhere else to turn, so they'll have to kiss and make up. Domestically, the Jewish lobby will grumble, but it will be more noise than substance; they're mostly Democrats anyway."

"Roberts, that is really far-out; I'll have to think long and hard on that one. They have a pretty tough little army, and hell, they use our tactics and our weapons better than we do. Could our guys handle them? And, as I said, the Middle East is too unpredictable. And you can't make that much of a switch without stirring up a massive reaction."

"This is a pretty sad state of affairs," Roberts said in a wistful voice. "No place in the world to start a splendid little war, easily worth 20 points in the polls."

Suddenly there was a great commotion outside Crawford's office. The President, flanked by Clark, Meese, Shultz, Weinberger, and Baker, had just left the NSC meeting room.

Crawford sidled up to his boss and asked, "What's up?"

The reply came in even, measured tones. "Last night, two Vietnamese patrol boats tried to torpedo our destroyer escorts on patrol in the open seas near Tonkin Gulf. We have some sonar soundings, and some confused eye-witness reports, but the President is fighting mad. Someone claims to have heard him say that this time, it will be different . . . ."

As he turned his alarm clock off, Roberts pinched himself to make sure he was awake. He was shivering, in a cold sweat; his heart was pounding. In the shower, he decided he would do his jogging at noon today, and brown-bag it alone in his office. Also, he said to himself, better keep a closer watch on Crawford. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There has been a lot of discussion lately, some of it serious and much of it not, about the difficulties facing the American labor unions. As devoted supporters of unionism, we decided to check this out by asking for brief and reliable accounts of what is going on in various unions. We'll run these from time to time, as they become available. — EDS.

A Talk with Owen Bieber of the UAW

In mid-July, on a hot Detroit afternoon, I came to Solidarity House—the national headquarters of the United Automobile Workers Union—to have a talk with Owen Bieber, the union's new president. The result follows below.

In a 1961 film illustrating how the UAW was training a new generation of leaders, Brendan Sexton, the union's educational director, and Guy Nunn, its TV and radio commentator, chose to focus on the experiences of a typical student at the Black Lake, Michigan, educational center created by Walter Reuther. A big, burly, and friendly local leader was shown attending classes, listening to a European trade union delegation, and otherwise absorbing the ideas often referred to as "Reutherism." Neither the producers nor the local leader had the faintest idea that 22 years later Owen Bieber, the man in the film, would be the successor to Douglas Fraser as the UAW's president.

I had seen the film just before meeting with Bieber, so I asked, "Owen, did you ever dream in 1961 that someday you would sit in Walter's chair?" With a healthy laugh Bieber replied, "No! A lot of people helped me get here. Ken Robinson [a talented regional director whose death a few years ago was a great loss to the UAW] helped me a lot. If it wasn't for people like him, I wouldn't be here." Bieber's candor and lack of pretention are among his most appealing characteristics. It's Owen to everybody—not Mr. President.

Bieber is a genuine Midwesterner and of solid blue-collar background. He raised his Catholic family in the part of Michigan known as Dutch Reformed country, built his house himself, and then his small cabin "up North" in the Michigan woods. And he is a product of the UAW political and educational process. He has shared the UAW experience at all levels of leadership—serving as shop steward, organizing, setting up picket lines, running a local, servicing local unions, and as regional director. He is a man who personifies the legacy of the UAW—and the generation succeeding that of the union's founders in the '30s. He was not molded by the Great Depression; his folks were. Nor was he shaped by the radical politics of the '30s. He is of a later generation—a proud union man, a plain-speaking liberal in the best sense of the word.

Owen Bieber expects to be listened to, not only at the many difficult auto negotiations that now confront him but also on a whole range of public issues. And he feels ready for his new job. He is prepared to grow in it. And he has the capacity to succeed. — B. J. WIDICK

B. J. WIDICK: *How would you describe the new generation of leaders of the United Automobile Workers Union and the labor movement in contrast to the veterans of the 1930s?*

OWEN BIEBER: I would say there's more continuity than discontinuity between today's leadership and the UAW pioneers. I've heard people say that participation in the struggle to create the union was a unique and priceless experience, and I agree. But there were some pretty tough struggles waged against the companies in the '50s, '60s and '70s, too, and these also helped to form attitudes and mold leaders.

Besides, grasping what the UAW is about is as much an intellectual process as it is a matter of experience. Walter Reuther was above all a man of ideas and principles, and the commitment to ideas and principles is alive and well among today's UAW leaders.

W.: *Some political pundits are arguing that an*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

endorsement from labor in 1984 may be a kiss of death. What do you think?

B.: Well obviously, Reagan or any other Republican candidate would try to play it that way and represent the Democratic candidate as the captive of "special interests." But precisely because all the other "special interests" are tightening up their endorsement processes, it's not clear that the AFL-CIO endorsement would come in for any special attack. I would also say that it's important for the labor movement to unify its political activity and boost rank-and-file awareness and enthusiasm as much as possible, even though this could produce a backlash. Labor must learn to think of itself more as a "party" in its own right. It cannot afford to sit on the sidelines when the interests of its members are at stake in the political process.

W.: *American unions generally appear to be in the public's doghouse. Is any of this labor's fault? How do you propose to overcome this prejudice?*

B.: America is culturally a middle-class society that tends to identify with business and business values rather than with workers and their organizations. The pariah character of organized labor is therefore nothing new, and it is constantly reinforced by media stereotyping and antiunion bias in news reporting. Part of it's our fault in that we have just enough rotten apples and bad incidents to provide grist for the media's mill. All of labor's civic and charitable contributions can be wiped out of the public consciousness overnight when union-connected scandals are spread across the front pages of the newspapers. There are a number of ways to combat the negative image, although we should never expect to succeed fully. One is to demand history and economics curricula in our schools and colleges that do justice to labor. Another is to grab a piece of the mass media ourselves, using the new communications technology. At the UAW, for example, we're starting to use television along with radio and print. Our organizing and political programs depend in large part on changing the atmospherics.

W.: *Given the prospect of auto-industry prosperity for the next few years—high profits with fewer workers—what can the United Auto Workers do to help its permanently unemployed workers, who number thousands?*

B.: The UAW board recently condemned the auto companies' extensive use of overtime while over 200,000 laid-off workers are anxiously waiting to come back. We are meeting with management over this issue and hope to make some progress. But the basic situation you outline—higher profits with fewer workers—is a long-term structural problem that is difficult to address. The auto industry will never again employ as many production workers as it did five years ago. We favor income and health insurance maintenance for the structurally dislocated workers, and we also need much more extensive retraining programs to prepare them for new kinds of jobs in auto as well as for jobs outside the auto industry. We won't get the programs we need without a major political redirection and a national commitment to full, secure, and decently compensated employment as a basic right.

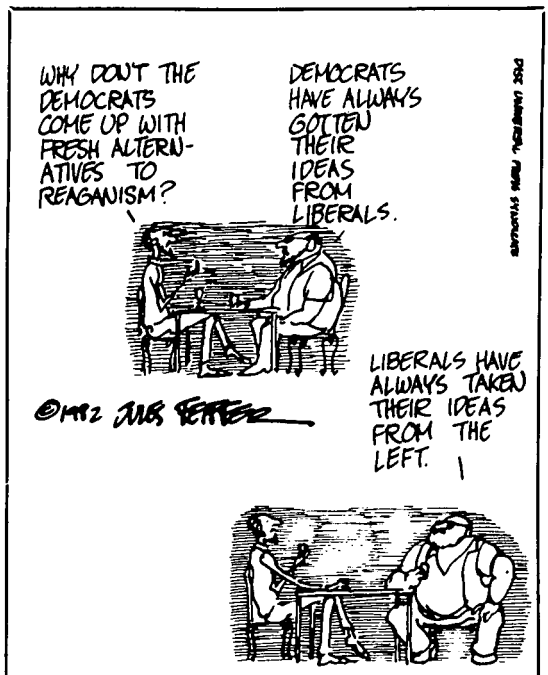
W.: *How do you foresee the character of the membership and status of the United Auto Workers five years from now?*

B.: It's possible that, five years from now, the UAW will be smaller than it is today; but I doubt it will be a less powerful institution. For the present, 1.1 million active and 300,000 retired UAW members still form a rather large organization. The political strength of the union has never been strictly a function of its numerical size but has flowed in equal part from the quality of its ideas and the degree of its activism, neither of which we expect to diminish. In five years, our members in production industries—auto, farm equipment, aerospace—could be down in numbers but probably up in skills and relative income. A larger portion of our membership will probably consist of white- and pink-collar workers, since these are all areas where we've stepped up our organizing efforts. And we may have additional "high-tech" production workers as well.

W.: *What is the toughest challenge you face as the new leader of the United Auto Workers?*

B.: My toughest challenge is to guide the union through the shoals of massive restructuring in the industrial economy—our bread and butter—while maintaining and, we hope, intensifying the UAW's role as a leader in the liberal community. There is a natural tendency and pressure to turn inward during difficult times, but I believe that abandoning our social activism would be self-defeating. Without a strong activist movement in this country and Canada, the UAW's political programs—such vital measures as auto content legislation and a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


WHY DON'T THE DEMOCRATS COME UP WITH FRESH ALTERNATIVES TO REAGANISM?
DEMOCRATS HAVE ALWAYS GOTTEN THEIR IDEAS FROM LIBERALS.
©1982 JIM FERRER
LIBERALS HAVE ALWAYS TAKEN THEIR IDEAS FROM THE LEFT.

THINK TANK FOR THE AMERICAN LEFT

Featuring: Feminist politics, democratic movements, labor struggles, organizing strategies and left perspectives on American economics, politics and culture.

Subscribe now.

3202 ADELINE BERKELEY, CA 94703

Socialist Review

☐ $19.50 One year subscription (6 issues)

☐ $22 Outside of USA

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP

progressive industrial policy—will fail, and if they fail, our members' jobs will be increasingly threatened.

W.: *The AFL–CIO and the UAW have often disagreed on foreign policy. For example, UAW statements have been far more critical of U.S. administration policy on Central America and Chile than those made by Lane Kirkland, the president of the AFL–CIO. Do you foresee that disagreement changing?*

B.: Lane Kirkland may hold strong views on foreign- and defense-policy questions, but he is an intelligent and reasonable man and open to persuasion. There is a shifting consensus on many of these matters within the AFL–CIO executive council, and Lane has not tried to resist the change although he has advocated his position energetically.

W.: *Given the expansion of the American auto industry on a world scale—General Motors, for example, has more employees abroad than in the United States—what can the UAW do to prevent "outsourcing" of supplies and expansion of production abroad at the expense of American jobs?*

B.: Our current national agreements with Ford and GM attempt to limit both foreign outsourcing and the sourcing from nonunion suppliers in this country. Not only must the companies give us advance notice and an opportunity to reverse outsourcing decisions, but we won the right to bring previously outsourced work back into UAW plants. The companies also agreed to a 24-month moratorium on plant closings owing to outsourcing. The real solution to the export of auto jobs, of course, is enactment of domestic content legislation, which would affect the U.S.-based companies every bit as much as foreign producers.

W.: *In quality and price the Japanese car-makers appear to have a major competitive advantage over our domestic manufacture. Can that be overcome?*

B.: We argue strongly that the Japanese companies' supposed quality advantage is rapidly disappearing and has already disappeared in some segments of the market. The new Ford and GM light trucks, for instance, are rated as good as or better than their Japanese competition. The U.S. companies have greatly improved the "fit and finish" of their products, and Japanese cars continue to do poorly in safety tests when matched against com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

parable U.S.-built models. Product quality is really a matter of commitment, and we have that commitment now on the part of the companies and the union. As far as price is concerned, it's now clear that three-fourths of the Japanese price advantage is the result of the overvalued dollar against the yen, whereas only a small proportion is caused by labor costs in Japan. So the only rational way to address the problem is to push for a readjustment in exchange rates rather than push U.S. wages down.

W.: *Given the many blunders American carmakers have made in policy decisions for which the auto workers have paid a high price in concessions to give the companies a "breathing spell," shouldn't the United Auto Workers become more involved in management decision-making? Would labor on the boards of directors be a step in that direction?*

B.: We want to become more involved in company policy matters, and a board seat for the UAW president was part of the Chrysler rescue package. We also negotiated a union board seat at American Motors, but the Federal Trade Commission blocked it. At Ford and GM, we have the right to address the boards and consult regularly with senior management. In general, we have more access to information and more influence in management decisions than ever before. I don't think there will be a retreat on that. □

David Kusnet

AFSCME Victory in California

When it comes to public-sector unionism, sometimes good news is no news. How else to explain the refusal of the news media to cover the largest union organizing victory in recent history?

In ballots counted on June 29, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) won elections to represent almost 30,000 nonteaching employees of the University of California (UC). They include approximately 19,000 clerical workers, 6,000 service workers, and 4,000 hospital workers at the UC system's nine campuses and five teaching hospitals.

This AFSCME organizing victory, one would think, is a major labor news story. Yet as this is written, it has received little coverage outside of California. Not a word in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, or even the *Wall Street Journal*, whose weekly "Labor Letter" column is a virtual bulletin board of labor news.

Perhaps by the time this is published, the media will have pointed to the UC election as an example of a successful union-organizing campaign, at a time when the labor movement is supposed to be declining in membership strength, bargaining power, and political influence. More likely, however, Labor Day 1983 will bring more news reports rehashing familiar themes—that the unions are locked into declining industries and regions, are unwilling to organize white-collar employees and outclassed by the new breed of management consultants.

There's some truth in these generalizations. But AFSCME's recent organizing victories, particularly in California, prove that such pessimistic conclusions about the labor movement aren't invariably true. Perhaps that's why the media haven't covered the UC organizing victory—it doesn't fit in with their premature obituaries for the unions.

According to much prevailing wisdom about the state of the unions, AFSCME's UC election victory should never have happened. After all, it took place in the "Sunbelt," where unions are supposedly ineffective and unpopular. It involved a pre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dominantly white-collar work force, and white-collar employees are supposed to be indifferent or hostile to unions. And AFSCME outsmarted a management campaign that resembled—and may even have improved upon—the standard antiunion campaign developed by the professional consultants who promise corporations, hospitals, and other employers that they'll help them maintain "a union-free environment."

So far, full-fledged antiunion campaigns are rare in the public sector, especially among employers like the University of California, with relatively liberal reputations. Yet, using its own management experts as well as outside consultants, the UC waged an antiunion campaign that included "captive-audience" meetings for employees, literature distributions and mailings, and the use of supervisors in attempts to convince or intimidate workers not to support the union.

THE MANAGEMENT CAMPAIGN didn't lack financing. The *Los Angeles Times* estimated the total cost at $1 million or more in federal and state funds. In 1982, the UC regents voted 11 to 9 to use $157,000 in federal funds to campaign against unionization. This money came from UC's "Opportunity Fund"—paid by the federal government for the overhead costs of administering contracts and research grants. But the $157,000 may have been only a small part of the total cost of the management campaign. California Congressman Pete Stark obtained a report from the U.S. Department of Energy showing that at one facility alone, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, UC management spent $247,000 to campaign against unions.

The standard antiunion campaign attacks the union as an "outsider" that will burden the workers with strikes and high dues. UC management adapted that pitch to the individualistic California temperament, warning that unionization would submerge workers into a presumably unwanted collectivity and bring rigid work rules into each office, hospital, campus, and work area. Moreover, management claimed, collective bargaining, with its adversary relationship between employer and employee, would bring disharmony into the university's work environment.

The management campaign started almost two years ago, beginning on a high note, with the distribution of slick, illustrated folders on the benefits of "Working for the University." It concluded on a low note, with pamphlets warning that unionization would lead to an "increase in tension, confrontation, and conflict." AFSCME, however, succeeded in turning around the two most potent emotional issues that often cause white-collar workers to vote against unions—the fears of conflict with management and of union "outsiders" pushing employees around.

AFSCME organizers and campaign literature adopted a nonconfrontational approach, offering UC employees "a stronger voice" at the bargaining table and before the board of regents and the state legislature. AFSCME's newsletters and mailing pieces were factual and low-key, stressing such issues as occupational safety and health and the need of opportunities for career advancement. And they reported that the most recent University of California budget, which didn't provide pay raises for most workers, did include salary increases for top administrators and funding for ambitious construction programs.

AFSCME told UC workers that without a strong voice they surely could expect more layoffs, pay freezes, and deteriorating working conditions—yet, with it, they would stand a better chance of winning improvements in pay, benefits, working conditions, and career opportunities. The union promised nothing more than strong representation. In this era of budget cuts in education and health care, the UC employees decided that doing without representation was a greater risk than voting for the union.

AFSCME's victory is not a triumph for slick public relations. Many professionally run campaigns have lost, and the burgeoning industry of Washington-based public relations consultants to the labor movement has few organizing victories to its credit. The UC victory belongs to hundreds of union supporters on the campuses and in the hospitals who spread the message to their co-workers—and to AFSCME's California organizing staff. That staff is a remarkably heterogeneous group, largely of former UC employees, all sharing a good-natured fanaticism about their work.

In August 1982, about ten months before the election, I walked through the UCLA hospital with AFSCME organizers and employee activists. My "tour guides" stopped constantly to talk with hospital workers, calling most of them by name, and discussed the progress of grievances, safety problems in the parking lot, and the status of the organizing campaign. By the end of the day I felt we had a good chance to win the election. AFSCME was rooted so deeply in that working environment that it would be almost impossible for management to portray the union people convincingly as "outsiders."

Now that the elections are over, UC officials are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ready to bargain with AFSCME. And AFSCME has doubled its potential membership in California —no small victory for a union whose strength traditionally has been in the industrial Northeast and Midwest.

CALIFORNIA HASN'T BEEN the only state where AFSCME has successfully organized public employees in recent years. Since the mid-1960s, AFSCME has been the fastest growing union in the AFL–CIO, increasing its membership from 250,000 in 1964 to more than a million today. AFSCME's dramatic growth began during the Great Society years, when increases in domestic social spending swelled the ranks of state and local government employees. However, AFSCME kept growing in the '70s, when public social spending wound down, and many state and local governments began laying off workers or were freezing new hirings. Now in the third year of the Reagan presidency, AFSCME continues to grow, despite —or perhaps because of—drastic reductions in federal aid to state and local governments and severe cuts in public services and work forces. At times when their jobs and paychecks are imperiled, public employees—like other workers—seek the protection of union representation.

Since Reagan took office in 1981, AFSCME has won elections to represent large units of state clerical workers in Florida and Connecticut, as well as at the UC. Hard times also have encouraged formerly independent associations of public employees to join AFSCME. Associations that have affiliated with AFSCME since 1981 include the 17,000-member Ohio Civil Service Employees Association, the 7,500-member Arizona Public Employees Association, and associations in New Mexico and South Dakota. They are following in the footsteps of the largest independent public employee association of them all—the 230,000-member Civil Service Employees Association of New York State—which joined AFSCME in 1978.

THE UNION they're joining is frequently misrepresented in the news media. The neoliberal guru Charles Peters of the *Washington Monthly* summed up popular misconceptions about AFSCME in an article several years ago, contending that AFSCME is predominantly white-collar, with a large federal-employee contingent, and that its late president, Jerry Wurf, cared more about well-heeled government bureaucrats than underpaid hospital workers. In fact, AFSCME consists almost entirely of state and local government employees; its membership is still primarily blue-collar; and, whatever the color of their collars, AFSCME members perform some of the most unpleasant and overlooked jobs in our society. Far from being the legendary overpaid federal bureaucrats, AFSCME members are more likely to empty bedpans in hospitals, care for the mentally ill and the retarded, clean the streets, repair bridges and highways, prepare and serve school lunches, handle welfare and unemployment claims, type and file government documents, and guard cellblocks in the prisons.

For years, AFSCME may have been synonymous with Jerry Wurf, the feisty, fiery socialist who headed the union from 1964 until his death in 1981. Now the leadership of the national union has passed to a younger generation, including the union's president, Jerry McEntee and its secretary-treasurer, Bill Lucy. Both were shaped by the issues and efforts of the 1960s and '70s and share a commitment to AFSCME's traditionally progressive politics, aggressive organizing, and political action. Both are more low-key than Wurf—which would be a safe description of almost anyone. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

D. A. N. Jones

"Labour Isn't Working"

The Present State of the British Labour Movement

There are prominent members of the Labour party, both on the left and on the right, who don't seem to recognize the severity of the beating we suffered in the general election of June 1983. But some of us at the grass roots, among the media, fear that we are in danger of being elbowed onto that old "rubbish heap of history," while we witness the Americanization of the British political establishment.

The British Labour movement sees itself as a coalition of coalitions. The arguments in every little branch of every trade union, every little local ward of the Labour party, tend to divide members between groups calling themselves "left" or "moderate" (rarely calling *themselves* "right," only their opponents). However, during my 30-odd years as a Labour party member and trade unionist, we have maintained a sort of unity, a national fraternity, a coalition based on the power and authority of "labour" as a human and economic fact of life. There have been only two political parties that can form a national government: one represents "labour," the other property, "capital."

In the 1980s our confidence has gone. The defeat of June 1983 demonstrates that the place of "labour," the working class, in the life and economy and the political establishment of the nation is thought to be unsure. The root cause of our insecurity is our ever-increasing unemployment—and the ever-increasing belief that it is unavoidable, *structural* unemployment. This is summed up in the triumphant slogan of the Conservative party, the party of capital: "Labour Isn't Working!"

So there is now a third party, led by right-wing defectors from the Labour party, which makes no claim to represent "labour." This Social Democratic party has been presented by the media as a credible alternative to the Conservatives. And millions of electors who usually vote Labour have found this SDP credible. It has won few seats but has helped Labour to lose many. In our most pessimistic moments, we ordinary members of the Labour party now can imagine our representation in Parliament and local councils dwindling to insignificance and our trade unions losing all political authority. I torture myself with a vision of our two-party system developing in the American manner (as I see that system, perhaps naively), with our Conservatives getting to be even more like the U.S. Republican party, and our Social Democrats playing the role of the U.S. Democratic party—liberal capitalists kindly looking down upon "labour" and "the minorities." This is not the kind of Americanization we require.

There is a conservative philosopher, Roger Scruton, whose conclusions I deplore but whose formulations I admire. "Power and authority seek each other," he writes. "Their search is the process of politics, while establishment is the condition which their meeting creates. Power without authority is *unhappy* power. It is *at large* in the world, distributing violence without earning respect." The sort of authority he means is something like moral authority, justification.

As a local councillor in an inner-city area,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when I have been badgered by "community leaders" I have always been able to retort, crudely: "What's your authority? Are you self-appointed? I've been *elected*!" That is my authority, my justification, like that of a member of Parliament. Those community leaders (who want to be "established," too) may first sneer at my vote count (my small majority) and then justly claim moral authority as the voice for some downgraded underdog group—generally called a "minority." The working class, seen as "labour," has always claimed a similar moral authority—but it is the authority of a downgraded underdog *majority*, seeking the power it justly deserves in order to create an establishment that may be counted democratic—by weight of numbers. "We are many, ye are few!" is the old cry of democrats to the men of property. "You lucky few are riding on our backs!" But if the men of property do not need that majority (except as consumers), if the working class is not working, if "labour" is being turned away forever, then its party has lost both authority and power—and we don't know what democracy means anymore.

All this may sound too abstract and philosophical to mean anything to us "ordinary" trade unionists and voters as we cast our ballots. But in fact all our political discussions nowadays are focused on what democracy means when "Labour Isn't Working."

Here is the front-page story of the July 4 London *Evening Standard* (a Conservative paper with a local monopoly):

> Miners' leader Arthur Scargill today called on all unions to reject the General Election result and take extra-parliamentary action against "this totally *undemocratic* government." In a speech which will divide the Labour Movement, he said he was not prepared to accept Mrs. Thatcher's policies because she was elected by only 40 percent of voters. Accepting that there would be an outcry over "my refusal to accept the *democratic* will of the people," he went on: "Faced with possible parliamentary destruction of all that is good and compassionate in our society, extra-parliamentary action will be the only course open to the working class and the Labour Movement."

So extraparliamentary action can be seen as more *democratic* than the established, if flawed, process of vote-counting.

The second lead story in that same paper is about the more "moderate" left-winger Moss Evans, leader of the Transport and General Workers Union (of which I am a former member). This union, the biggest in the United Kingdom, has a 1.25-million block vote at the conference of the Labour party—one-eighth of the total. Moss Evans told delegates at his union conference that he wanted them to give this large vote to Neil Kinnock, one of the more left-wing candidates for the leadership of the Labour party, now that Michael Foot is retiring from that position. The union's conference was, said Moss Evans, "the most *effective democratic* voice in decision-making."

An opposing delegate forcefully protested that all the members of the union ought to vote on the choice of the Labour party's leader, by secret, postal ballot. "It is nonsense to pretend that this is *democracy*. They are trying to steamroller it through." Now it so happens that it is Conservative party policy to try and make trade union leaders conduct secret, postal ballots of their members before taking decisions. This supposedly "democratic" stratagem is designed as a blow against more militant and left-wing members, since it ensures that the least politically conscious unionists will put their votes in, at home in their armchairs, influenced by their cautious families and the right-wing media, rather than by their workmates at meetings. It also, of course, takes time and money. Moss Evans (who won the conference argument) remarked: "Those who advocate armchair democracy should realize it is an expensive business." The trade unions are not rich or strong when "Labour Isn't Working," and the Labour party isn't in power.

There are plenty of Labour party members, both left and right, who now deplore the power of trade union leaders to influence the party's political decisions and choices of leadership. Such critics are denying the union leaders' authority, claiming that their power is undemocratic, because it is extraparliamentary. But I am one of those (self-styled) moderates who welcome trade union authority in our political establishment, since I hold that these extrapar-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

liamentary leaders lend a democratic authority to party and government decisions—that they represent the will of the people in our character as workers, apart from our character as voters in parliamentary elections.

Workers who might vote Conservative, who talk against unionism and avoid union meetings, are not always the slowest to call for a strike. Anyone who has worked in factories will have seen these jolly, nonpolitical fellows pushing a keen and serious lad into being their shop steward, their union representative. They will ignore all his boring meetings, leaflets, and instructions—until there is some sudden conflict with the employers that affects them personally. At this point their tempers flare up and they will push their shop steward into militant confrontation, while he struggles to explain to them the complexities of the issue, the tactics and strategy required. That, at least, is one kind of shop steward. There are many others. (They are all, of course, victimized by the Conservative media and labeled "Red Robbo" or the "Red Mole.")

Trade union leaders know this sort of thing from experience. They know what it feels like to be "labour"—in all the details of the double-time-and-a-quarter, clocking-in, piecework, time-and-motion study, searching of a person at the factory gate or washing-up time. . . . This sort of extraparliamentary experience and knowledge is vital to the Labour party, especially now that so many of our members of Parliament (lawyers, lecturers, and teachers) lack personal experience of the "labour" they represent. Our party began as the Labour Representation Committee and, 50 years ago, it was normal for "labour" to be represented in Parliament by men and women who were experienced in manual work. Are those days gone forever—now that "Labour Isn't Working"?

Last month, my local Labour party ward was choosing a parliamentary candidate. Afterward I consoled one of the unsuccessful candidates, remarking that still, it was good to see a female engineer on the shortlist. She told me that she used to be a university lecturer; she became an engineer partly because she thought there were too many lecturers on the Labour benches in Parliament. She is not the only Labour party member who takes the word "labour" seriously. A man has called at my house to fix my telephone and I found, in conversation, that he is the young brother of two men I have known as fiery left-wingers, who still are working successfully as elected members of local councils. The lad spoke with friendly mockery of his brothers, who had attended more "selective" schools than he, and of their "bureaucratic" (that is, white-collar) mentality. For he felt himself to be a *worker*, working-class, true Labour in every sense.

To be more personal, let me admit that the fact that I am an Oxford graduate has deterred me from attempting parliamentary candidacy. Though I am gratified by Oxford's connection with the Labour movement (from Ruskin and William Morris onward), there are too many Oxford graduates in the party leadership. Since Churchill's time, every British prime minister has been an Oxford man or woman—apart from the brief interregnum of James Callaghan. He won the post in competition with five Oxford men; although I wouldn't have chosen him, I was glad that at last we had an early school-leaver again!

Our Oxford-educated leaders may adopt a left-wing stance, like the famous Tony Benn and the up-and-coming Michael Meacher. Or they may be right-to-moderate, like the outdated Denis Healey (more popular with voters than within the party) or the shrewd Gerald Kaufman, whom I admire. But the connection between Labour-party hegemony and the Oxford Union debating chamber is too tight to be healthy: it is almost *exclusive*. We are not yet in the American position, where a national party's leader has to be a millionaire!

Three of the popular leaders of the breakaway Social Democratic party were my Oxford contemporaries—Shirley Williams, Bill Rodgers, and Dick Taverne. All became prominent Labour MPs, like their senior colleague Roy Jenkins, who was at Oxford before them. They talk about "breaking the mold" of British politics, and they have at least loosened the valuable, if over-tight, rivet that links Oxford left-wing politics with the world of "labour." They have no intention of identifying or even associating themselves with trade unions (so much

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

weakened by Conservative political policies and the concomitant unemployment). They have no desire to encourage common ownership of resources on behalf of the working class. Their position is strengthened by the fact I began with—expressed in that triumphant, gloating Conservative party slogan: "Labour Isn't Working."

The slogan was devised by Saatchi & Saatchi, the advertising firm that works so skilfully for the party of capital. They first put it out in 1979, against the then Labour government, underneath a poster photograph of mournful movie extras (Saatchi & Saatchi employees in real life), lined up as if in search of work. It had, of course, more than one meaning. "Labour government doesn't work, is inefficient." "The so-called working class isn't doing as much work as it makes out." "There is too much unemployment."

Among the native English (especially the working class), such wordplay is a natural means of communication. This makes life harder for our immigrants, whose English is simpler, more straightforward; they don't always see the point of the slogans. The extreme right, the racist, near-fascist groups that hover around the fringes of the Conservative party are practiced in innuendo. When they write "muggers" (a word they have joyfully borrowed from America) they expect you to read "niggers." If they put up a poster—"Mosley was right. Keep Britain British"—they expect you to see the rhyme: for "British" read "white." Much more crafty are Saatchi & Saatchi, whose most recent Conservative poster showed a conservative-looking "black" man, with the caption: "Labour says he's black. *We* say he's British." The conventional use of the word "black" is another borrowing from America.

So is the now conventional use of the word "gay"—which brings in some votes but loses others. Shortly before the general election, there was an important testing-ground by-election at Bermondsey, an inner-London constituency that had been thought "safe" for the Labour party. The Labour candidate, however, was alleged to be not only left-wing but homosexual and connected with gay politics. The retiring Labour MP, a right-wing defector, did not want the gay left-winger to be elected. So he put up another right-wing defector (well-known locally) as an independent candidate, under the label "*Real* Labour," to take Labour votes away. Their game was to pose as "real working-class," in the style of Bermondsey's famous Cockney entertainers Tommy Steele and Max Bygraves. Their performance helped to result in victory for the Liberal candidate (strengthened by formal alliance with the new Social Democrats).

The "Real Labour" comedian sang a song. It was a parody of a popular ditty in the self-mocking working-class style: "My old man's a dustman, he wears a dustman's hat. He wears gorblimey trousers and he lives in a council flat." Quite a good song. The vicious parody offered by "Real Labour" ran: "Tatchell is an Aussie, he lives in a council flat. He wears his trousers back to front, 'cause he don't know this from that." The newspapers printed this song, with gleeful hypocrisy: "What's so *wrong* with being an Aussie? What's *wrong* with living in a council flat?" They did not point out that the last two lines were even more vicious if you remember the English expression—"He don't know his arse from his elbow"—and you alter the last line to rhyme with "front."

How *silly* all this is, how downmarket! *Tribune*, the old Labour weekly of Aneurin Bevan, Michael Foot, and George Orwell, wittily mocked the Bermondsey by-election in a cartoon strip, with characters drawn from the American movie *On the Waterfront*. Bermondsey was, until recently, populated by waterfront workers, but now they are only consumers—downmarket. Such are our means of communication at street level, the so-called grass roots. The style is reflected, at upmarket level, by hired advertising specialists, cartoonists, and headline writers, rather than by parliamentary speeches and leading articles in the *Times*.

Before we leave this silliness of nicknames and images, consider the treatment of Michael Foot, our retiring leader. Some have been puzzled by his popularity in the Labour movement—respected (in the working-class phrase) as "a scholar and a gentleman," rather than rejected as "a bloody intellectual." I once suggested that he was well-loved, at all levels of education, as "everyone's favorite English mas-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ter." But his enemies in the upmarket press (and therefore and thereby television) decided to nickname him "the Old Bibliophile"—and everything was done to caricature him as an absent-minded professor, too old, too bookish.

At downmarket level, he was nicknamed "Worzel Gummidge," after a comic scarecrow in children's books and (thereby) television. This nickname was devised by *Private Eye*, an influential, large-circulation satirical magazine that many young people mistakenly think to be radical and independent. Michael Foot gained this nickname through attending a Remembrance Day ceremony (shown on television) while wearing a coat that many would think too shabby and informal. The Queen Mother, sensing this embarrassment, was quick to congratulate him on his good, warm coat. But *Private Eye* is no lady (more of a whore, really) and the right-wing press is no gentleman. He was transmogrified into Worzel Gummidge, the scarecrow, as well as the Old Bibliophile.

Michael Foot traveled the country during the general election, winning real acclamation from working-class audiences at crowded meetings for his eloquent discussion of the real issues. But the armchair democrats at their television screens knew only the images and the nicknames devised by his enemies in the media. The most farcical effort came from the pathetic advertising firm hired by the Social Democrats. They showed Margaret Thatcher ("the Iron Lady") as the Tin Man from *The Wizard of Oz* with Michael Foot, of course, as the Scarecrow. The slogans were: "If she only had a heart" and "If he only had a brain." They added: "Thank goodness we've got a *third* choice!"—Roy Jenkins. You can imagine the scope this offered to graffito-writers, thinking of the Cowardly Lion and "If he only had the noive!" This rather ghastly section of my article reflects one aspect of our Americanization. It is the Disneyland tendency—sheer Mickey Mouse.

Commercial television and (even more so) commercial radio are latecomers to our political establishment. Since they are compelled by law to attempt to maintain the standards of the BBC, these media acquire a sort of authority. As viewers and listeners, we may feel that the producers, interviewers, and hosts of the programs are somehow "above" party politics, trying to be fair and independent. Those I know are indeed inclined to shun the adversary politics of "labour" and "capital": they are by temperament, class, and work experience sympathetic to a "center" party, Liberals or Social Democrats, with no power base of class or local roots—no *center*, really. Such interviewers and hosts have a knowing, above-it-all, "plague-on-both-your-houses" manner when introducing practical politicians, and their style and manner is infectious, making the audience skeptical of all enthusiasm, every bold suggestion. We identify with the interviewer, not with the contenders.

The younger Labour party members, canvassing voters in this last election, were dismayed by the prevalence of that quick, dismissive response: "Yes, yes, we're following it all on television." They had not recognized that a selection of skilfully chosen highlights, featuring the most interesting politicians on the domestic screen, has an appeal for the armchair democrat that beats talking to some local Labour-party kid or going to a local meeting to hear the local candidate. If our elections have become television events, perhaps that is another aspect of our particular kind of Americanization.

Television favors the Liberals and the Social Democrats, since they are media personalities, liked by the broadcasting people. TV also favors right-wing, upmarket journalists, since it draws its opinion suppliers from the national upmarket press. Broadcasting interviewers, talk-show hosts, and producers do not express opinions of their own; so they choose journalists, as they see it, impartially, based on their idea of "the right" and "the left." Thus television lends its *authority* to the upmarket (not the downmarket) press, extending those journalists' influence and power.

We Labour party members may fancy ourselves "middle-of-the-road." Well to our left is the Communist and Trotskyite press; somewhere to our right is the *Guardian* (Liberal and Social Democratic), then comes the staunchly Conservative *Daily Telegraph*, and finally the extreme-right racist press (we combat it in real

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

life, but it is properly ignored, when possible, by all reputable media). For the broadcasting companies, however, the *Guardian* is on the left and the *Daily Telegraph* on the right—and that is the length of the spectrum, the size of the arena.

Talk on radio and television has its own style. A man sings a passionate, rebellious rock song. Then he is interviewed. "Ha ha. Well, Tom, we had to include that because of its bizarre charm, if I may say so. I suppose that was pretty firmly tongue-in-cheek, eh, Tom?" Soon Tom is talking in that style too. So do the gutter-press editors of the right. When their newspaper workers are on strike, these editors appear on the screen, talking laid-back television talk. Then they are asked to read out the leading articles they would have printed, but for the wicked strikers. Unconvincingly, like amateur actors, they mumble their monosyllabic rant: "Yet again Red Ken shoots his big mouth off! When will he learn to belt up?" Then there is an embarrassed pause and they start talking normal bourgeois studio talk again.

This is low comedy. But the trap of television-style talk works also against Labour-party orators. We see film of a man at a public meeting, working up enthusiasm for some bold policy—nationalization of banks, public investment in "declining" industries, unilateral nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from the European Common Market, and so on. Then we return to the studio talkers—so independent, quizzical, skeptical—and the viewers begin to find the orator's style and *content* abnormal and old-fashioned, his proposals extremist and out-of-date. On British television, bold statements forcibly made are self-destructive.

All this month, the party managers and trade union leaders of the Labour movement have been arguing about which of the potential successors to Michael Foot has the best television image. "It's not a political beauty contest!" protests Peter Shore, one of the best of the contenders. But it is. We are following the Conservative pattern. When they decided their failed leader, Lord Home, had too aristocratic a television image to contend with the more populist-seeming Harold Wilson, they not unsuccessfully pitched on Ted Heath, who wasn't quite so classy. In the Labour movement now, the image-choosers are concentrating on Neil Kinnock (believed to be as "left" as Michael Foot) and Roy Hattersley (rather lonely on the moderate right, now that his old comrades all have defected to the Social Democrats). Each of these, curiously, has some of Michael Foot's old attractions as a vote-winner; but they are not hampered by the ageism that rejects years of service, nor by skilfully honed vote-losing nicknames. They won't be long in coming.

It is not my purpose here to argue for the detailed policy the Labour party presented at the general election. I agreed with most of it but accept the view that the proposals may have been too many and too bold—not for the people but for the media we have to use in communication. But I have to say something pessimistic about the regional breakdown of our failure—starting with the total loss of the south of England and our reliance on our heartlands in Wales (Neil Kinnock's home-ground) and northern England (Roy Hattersley's) and Scotland.

These heartlands are not as safe for the party as they might look. Their severe unemployment led them to vote Labour, hoping to get Labour in *power*: they are used to Labour being in power, locally. When Labour is out of power, it lacks its old authority, and our former voters may draw in their horns, accepting the Conservative contention that Britain has ceased to be a productive industrial nation—that there is no more need for "labour," that all they can hope for is dole money from the taxes paid by the better-educated minority employed in our forthcoming "information-technology" economy. The vote loss in Wales is particularly disheartening, on closer inspection.

One other point must be briefly discussed. There is a story put about that the election was lost through public distaste for the "left-wing extremists" in the Labour party. Many are labeled in this way. Some are young men and women in a hurry—"Nationalize the Banks *Tomorrow*!" Some of them have read some Marx, and they may organize around a small magazine and a pocket Socrates with a weekly column called "Teach Yourself Marxism,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which keeps reiterating the Theory of Surplus Value. Some may then call themselves Marxists—or even Trotskyists, or Marxist-Leninists. All this is customary in the Labour movement and probably good for it. There isn't much encouragement to study Marx's work in this country.

But it must be admitted that in recent years these hopeful "Marxists" have organized too offensively. They have worked on the membership of local wards and branches where they all parrot the same resolution, and they have bored the "moderate" (and the lazy) elements out of meetings with their very enthusiasm and their late hours. Both accidentally and on purpose, they have driven out "right-wingers"—many to the Social Democrats—and they may righteously claim that they have purified the party, in the cause of socialism.

This is the first time I have used here that word, "socialism," since it seems to mean something different in America—if I may judge by Marshall Berman's broad definition in the first paragraph of his article in the Spring *Dissent*. In Britain it is not a vague word like "democratic."* What it means is this: "common ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange." These words are on every Labour party member's card—whether they call themselves left, right, or moderate.

The successes of the "Marxist" left certainly persuaded voters that the Labour party *meant* this aspiration more seriously and urgently than usual—just as the Conservative party, this time, *meant* to impose its belief in "competition" and "private enterprise." Under Margaret Thatcher's government, "privatization" in the old American style has become a political reality that I don't believe the people who voted for her really wanted: they really thought that the National Health Service and British Rail were safe—but they are not. In their contribution to our old private-versus-public argument, I don't believe that the "Marxist" left has been a vote-loser.

More off-putting, perhaps, has been the organization of minority movements in what we, here in Britain, think of as "Kennedy-style" women's, gay, and black liberation movements. Such groups have generally been properly welcomed in the Labour movement, except by people like George Orwell who growled about "cranks" and "the dictatorship of prigs," complaining that they drove away the "ordinary working class." This need not be the case. We are not all "Real Labour" clowns, like those two idiots in Bermondsey. But if the minorities are too stridently organized, under shiny new American names, by an Americanized politician like Tony Benn, then they can be off-putting. This former right-winger became the figurehead on top of an umbrella movement of "the Left"—and was even welcoming a group that expected socialism to come from Outer Space.

In cold blood, we must accept that this tendency has been, electorally, good for our opponents—who call it "the Loony Left"—and has weakened our will to win. Some on the right haven't *wanted* to win; and some on the left have anticipated defeat, feeling that their ideas are too advanced for the electorate. What the "Marxists" in the Labour movement need to do, surely, is to avoid the temptation to treat Marx's work as Bibliolaters treat their Bible, searching for the appropriate text for all occasions—when they ought to be thinking like Marx, how he would argue against the Theory of Structural Unemployment. What does "exploitation" mean to a man looking for employment? What does the Labour Theory of Surplus Value mean when Labour isn't working?

I must not suggest that all the motives for voting Conservative were mean or stupid. Many of us were glad that our troops protected the Falkland islanders from the Argentine dictatorship—and were pleased that Margaret Thatcher kept her nerve: it was natural that many voters hoped that her self-confidence would be as beneficial in the puzzling world of work and money. Serious conversations during the general election would run: "What will our money be worth, if Labour gets in . . . ?" "Well,

* In Labour-movement shorthand, "democracy," to the right, means: "Nothing Like Soviet Russia" (Campaign for Democratic Socialism). To the left, it means: "Power to the Rank and File" (Campaign for Labour Party Democracy).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what's it worth now . . . ?" "With Labour, it would get even *worse*. . . ." There is the beginning of a great division of the working class, largely regional, between haves and have-nots, that is, have-jobs and have-no-jobs. The haves are certainly not to be despised.

As a self-employed writer, when needing more money, I have in the past got work at a local engineering factory, making things with lathes and cutting steel, or packing in a Central London warehouse. Both are closed now; but we Londoners are still better off for work than the people to our north. Last month I took a job as a motorcycle courier—feeling that I was part of the chimerical "information-technology" economy, as I sped with Dean Martin's work permit from a government office to his London agent!

One of my colleagues—something of a young conservative—was arguing with me about unemployment. "I've never been out of a job," he said, "even if only selling papers in the street. Look at the adverts for dispatch riders in the motorcycle press. How many lads are there in London, with motorbikes, who just sit back and say they're unemployed?" Of course, I reminded him how small a proportion of Britain's unemployed he was talking about. "You come from Lancashire," I said, "you were brought up in the Midlands. And you *know* laid-off miners and steelworkers can't all ride round London with Dean Martin's work permit!" But, of course, the last thing I'd want to do is weaken his self-confidence, his belief that *he* could always get a job.

What the Labour party has to do is disseminate a *communal* self-confidence, a faith that we can so order the economy that we *all* have a job. This we have not yet done; and that is why we lost the election. □

"INTRIGUING...DEFINITIVE

....*The Rosenberg File* has succeeded in the search for the truth.' "
—ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ,
THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

"Fascinating, compelling and altogether convincing, *The Rosenberg File* is a work of disciplined historical analysis that probably comes as close as we are likely to get to the truth about one of the century's most controversial trials."
—ARTHUR SCHLESINGER, JR.

"THE MOST THOROUGH ACCOUNT YET
to appear in print of Soviet espionage surrounding the Rosenbergs....and [an] often deeply disturbing portrait of the way the American judicial system dealt with the Rosenbergs and their accomplices at a time of severe anxiety about national security....*The Rosenberg File* lays to rest vital elements of the mythologies of left and right about the case...."
—ALAN WEINSTEIN,
NEW YORK MAGAZINE

THE ROSENBERG FILE

RONALD RADOSH & JOYCE MILTON *A SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH*

Selected by four major book clubs $22.50 **Holt, Rinehart & Winston**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Walter Dean Burnham

The Ascendancy of the Right

Why Are Reagan and Thatcher Strong in Times of Recession?

Since 1973 the world capitalist economy has been undergoing a crisis unprecedented in half a century—"the second slump," as Ernest Mandel rightly calls it. To be sure, each advanced industrial country has its own history, balance of political forces, and modes of response to this crisis. These singularities should never be dismissed—among other things, they strongly co dition the timing and character of the politic l response. They are also of the utmost im ortance in shaping the kinds of political el es that come to power in an era of dislocation. Yet a common pattern seems to be emerging. This pattern (and we must oversimplify it here) is one of ascendant conservatism in the core of the world capitalist "metropole." It might be described as "constrained socialism" in the European/Mediterranean rim, and as right-wing dictatorship punctuated by populist and Marxist insurgency in the less developed periphery, notably in the semideveloped countries of Latin America.

The shift from welfarist consensus to neolaissez-faire rightist dominance in the United States and in Britain has historical importance. It is nothing less than a "change of the macroeconomic regime," the sort of complex, major realignment that occurs only about every 50 years. Such changes, when they occur, confound the conventional wisdom of the preceding era.

Let us recall what was accepted as a matter of course not too many years ago. In Britain, a well-developed "collectivist consensus," in Samuel H. Beer's phrase, emerged out of the Second World War. This consensus was linked to the rise of the Labour party and the sophisticated response developed by progressive Tory leaders, most of them either members of the traditional British ruling elite or—like that transitional figure Edward Heath—thoroughly assimilated to its postwar outlook. The "collectivist consensus" was predicated on the immense power of organized labor on the one side and, on the other, on the willingness and capacity (both economic and psychological) of the traditional, deference-receiving, and largely secure ruling class to make accommodation to that power in order to preserve the legitimacy of the class state. As elsewhere in the West, the chief goal in Britain was shaped by the memory—highly selective, to be sure—of the Great Depression and the "lessons" it had taught. The goal was to be achieved, as elsewhere in the West, by stimulating economic growth on a scale that was large enough to pay for the very expensive state called for by the public consensus.

Things were, of course, quite different in the United States, and not merely in matters of detail. Perhaps the chief difference was that for nearly a generation after the war American proconsumption policy was oriented far more than British policy toward stimulating major private-sector transactions—opening up the mass-housing market through modifying credit and tax policies, for example—than through large-scale state regulatory and income-transfer interventions. It is for such reasons that the postwar American synthesis has been tagged as "interest-group liberalism" (in Theodore Lowi's words, in his book *The End of Liberal-*

With this article we continue a series on Problems of Democracy in Advanced Industrial Countries. The series has been made possible by a grant from the Joyce Mertz-Robert Gilmore Foundation, to which we express our gratitude. —Eds.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ism) or "political capitalism" (my own). Such a course was hardly surprising. It corresponded, in the first place, to the most deep-seated political values shared by American elites and much of the American public—values persistently hostile to any internally sovereign state of the European type. It was also made possible by the uniquely privileged position of the United States and its economy, the chief real winners of World War II.

Yet the objectives in Britain and the United States were broadly the same: to avoid the horrors of the 1930s by maintaining free trade in the international market and, at home, economic growth and mass consumption. The capitalist business cycle was to be smoothed out through macroeconomic policy. Here too there were "lessons" to be learned from the Great Depression, and they were to be applied in order to keep politicians in office and maintain general support for the political system as a whole. In Edward Heath's formulation, the objective was to present the "human face of capitalism" to an electorate keenly aware from its own past experience that capitalism also had a very different face. In both countries, surely, it would have been regarded as political suicide for an incumbent president or prime minister to wage war on inflation by launching depressionary policies. For the public would surely not stand for such policies, would it?

We have President Eisenhower's word for it that he didn't expect the public to stand for such policies. In the 1968 election campaign he commented, "I think Dick's going to be elected President but I think he's going to be a one-term President. I think he's really going to fight inflation, and that will kill him politically."[1] Needless to say, Nixon did not declare all-out war on inflation. Quite to the contrary: as Edward Tufte points out, he played the "political business cycle" game for all it was worth in 1972.[2] But Eisenhower's 1968 assessment illuminated the hold of political capitalism's "conventional wisdom" at its apogee.

Consider the current situation. In Britain, an intraparty revolt elevated Margaret Thatcher to power as leader of the Conservative party not long after it had lost the October 1974 election. Then, in 1979, Thatcher and her new "team" defeated a divided and exhausted Labour administration. In the spring of 1983, her ruthlessly constricting policies prompted *Business Week* to run scathing articles entitled "What Hath Thatcher Wrought?" It seems that the answer, in addition to national unemployment nearing 4 million, was wholesale devastation within Britain's manufacturing industry. But no matter: in the June 1983 election, Mrs. Thatcher's new "Ironsides" Conservatives won an overwhelming victory over an opposition nearly equally divided between the Labour party's remnants and the new Social Democratic-Liberal alliance. Shades of 1924—or even 1931!

Let us turn to two major continental European countries, France and West Germany. In France, François Mitterrand's Socialists swept into office in 1981—largely because of pent-up grievances among a public that had been ruled by conservatives for a quarter-century. But Mitterrand's regime very rapidly found that in the "banker's world" of international free trade, it could not succeed in going it alone with reflationary policies. The government, bowing to the inexorable constraints of the international "politics of power," shifted course toward restrictive domestic policies to keep the franc from collapse, thereby prompting an explosive reaction. No one supposes that the French Socialists could win a national election in 1983. Mitterrand and his colleagues are learning that it is just as difficult to pursue "socialism in one country" as Trotsky always said it would be—especially if the socialism is to remain democratic. As for West Germany, deepening economic stress eventually split the Socialist-Free Democratic coalition that had governed the country for more than a decade. The major proximate issues, of course, turned on differences over cutting the state budget. Christian Democratic leader Helmut Kohl led

[1] Douglas A. Hibbs, Jr., "Public Concern about Inflation and Unemployment in the United States," in Robert E. Hall, ed., *Inflation: Causes and Effects* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 211.

[2] Edward Tufte, *Political Control of the Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978), pp. 28–64.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his party to a large victory in the March 1983 elections that followed. As in Britain in 1979 and especially in 1983, and as in the United States in 1980, a great deal of this victory was won among working-class voters who had not previously supported conservatism.

Now to the United States. It is obvious that Ronald Reagan is the most ideological president to sit in the White House in modern times, if not ever. It is equally obvious that 1980 was no ordinary election. The rejection of Democrats went far beyond turning the hapless Jimmy Carter out of office. Reagan in office has pursued policies that have the direct effect of enriching the rich, impoverishing the poor, and inaugurating a second (and potentially lethal) phase of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and "world communism." The result has been a dramatic improvement in the inflation rate—but at what a cost! Sky-high real rates of interest, the highest since 1933, worked to paralyze housing and other major markets and to hamstring American exports. A civilian unemployment rate in excess of 10 percent, the highest since 1941, generates its usual human toll of destroyed dreams, suicides, family stress, deteriorating health standards, and multiplying home foreclosures. Desperate conditions in agriculture have prompted sheriffs' sales and ensuing disorders reminiscent of the 1930s. And, carrying the list no further, in the second quarter of 1983 (the period of "recovery" from this induced depression), business failures ran at a rate exceeding 100 per 10,000, the highest level since 1933.

But again, no matter. If he runs, as he probably will, Ronald Reagan is likely to be reelected next year. His margin will probably not be of the colossal proportions of Margaret Thatcher's 1983 victory in Britain, but it will be sufficient. In 1981 Reagan and his allies seized control of the public agenda, and debate over the agenda, through fundamental changes in fiscal, monetary, taxation, and foreign-military policy. That agenda as thus defined will dominate both government and "opposition," such as it is, for the rest of this decade.

Our task in what follows is to attempt to explain how it could be that, former Prime Minister Heath and others to the contrary, the "inhuman face of capitalism" has not only roared back into center-stage but is having a spectacularly successful political run.

The American welfarist consensus had, in some respects, always been more fragile than its European counterparts seemed to be. In large part, this reflected the unparalleled public acceptance of capitalism as such and—paralleling this—the intense hold of old-time business values upon large parts of the American middle class. Thus Reagan was prefigured by Barry Goldwater's capture of the Republican nomination as early as 1964, more than a decade before similar developments on the right in Britain and at the apogee of the Great Boom. Yet Goldwater's overwhelming defeat at the hands of Lyndon Johnson seemed to confirm (as did the massive rejection of George McGovern in 1972) that there was a "mainstream," that it was capitalist and welfarist, and above all pragmatic-centrist. Of all the pieces of conventional wisdom beloved by voting-behavior specialists, one of the most cherished was that any major-party candidate seen to be ideologically further away from these centrist, pragmatic voters than his opponent would lose their support. Yet Reagan was just such a candidate, and he won an easy victory in 1980.

The underlying material causes of the surge to the right are not difficult to ascertain. They are rooted in the serious and increasingly damaging crisis that has afflicted the capitalist world in general and, perhaps, Britain and the United States in particular. This crisis first became visible, not with the oil crisis in 1973–74, but with the Vietcong's Tet offensive of 1968 and the economic downturn that followed in 1969. It accelerated throughout the decade of the 1970s, reaching a crescendo at the very end. As we know all too well, this was (and is) both a geopolitical and a geoeconomic crisis. Beginning with American defeat in Vietnam, the imperial crisis culminated in African, Iranian, and Central American revolutions, multiplying disorders in the Middle East, and a manifest increase of Soviet military power relative to America's.

The economic crisis was chiefly marked by one of the great inflationary price revolutions

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in modern world history, and by an economic dependence on raw-material suppliers who were no longer stable members of the imperial system.

In America and elsewhere too, this transition was accompanied by dramatic declines in the rate of profit, multiplication of corporate and individual debt to unprecedentedly high (and dangerous) levels, and by a constantly accelerating rise in interest rates. The table below gives a concise inventory of major developments in the American economy over the past 50 years, excluding the period of the Second World War.

The striking decline in the rate of corporate profit—more than half from the 1956–68 period to the early 1980s—explains much about business pressure for tax relief. So does the pyramiding of short-term debt, particularly in relation to the liquid assets that might theoretically be required to pay it off. As debt saturation was also more than visible in the individual-consumer sector after the late 1960s, one can hardly be surprised at the tax revolts that developed in California, Massachusetts, and elsewhere by 1980. It is also noteworthy that the upward surge in price levels was quite visible *before* the twin oil shocks of 1973–74 and 1979 hit the economy. But the explosion of inflation thereafter wreaked substantial economic and psychological damage. One of its more interesting effects, as the table shows, is that it produced zero to negative real rates of return for investors across a long period of time.

Among the many other marvels and portents of the Carter years, the near-collapse of the bond market in early 1980 reflected a fundamental truth about inflation: it distorts markets, creates disincentives for saving and in-

The U.S. Economy: Selected Major Indicators, 1929–1982

Year or Period	Nonfinancial Profit Rate [1] (%)	Corporations: Liquidity [2] (Ratio)	Change Consumer Price Index (%)	Unemployment Rate (%)	Interest Rates [3]: Nominal (%)	Interest Rates [3]: "Real" [4] (%)	Total Government Sector: (all levels) as % of GNP: Receipts	Expenditures	Surplus/ Deficit
1929	8.9	0.667	0	3.2	5.4	5.4	10.9	10.0	+0.9
1933	-3.1	0.654	-5.3	24.9	2.9	8.2	16.7	19.2	-2.5
1934–1939	8.2	0.432	1.2	18.2	1.8	0.6	16.5	18.9	-2.4
1947–1955	20.2	0.470	2.4	4.2	2.6	0.3	24.5	23.4	+1.1
1956–1968	15.7	0.977	2.0	5.0	4.6	2.5	27.4	27.8	-0.4
1969–1973	10.3	1.757	5.0	5.0	7.3	2.2	30.8	31.1	-0.3
1974–1979	9.9	1.972	8.5	6.8	8.7	0.2	31.3	32.5	-1.2
1977–1980 (Carter years)	10.1	2.105	9.6	6.5	10.1	0.5	31.5	32.1	-0.6
1980–1982	7.7	2.337	10.0	8.1	14.1	4.1	32.0	34.0	-2.0
1982	6.4	2.425	6.1	9.7	13.7	7.6	31.7	35.4	-3.7

[1] There are a large number of ways to measure profit rates. The measure here is the percentage of pretax profits of the net capital stock of nonfinancial corporations. Capital-stock data through 1979 are contained in *Survey of Current Business*, February 1981, pp. 58, 62.

[2] Liquidity: Short-term debt divided by liquid assets of the nonfinancial corporate sector. Primary source: Federal Reserve Board, *Flow of Funds Accounts, 1945/49–1979* and updates. Rising ratio = more "leverage."

[3] Interest rates: Arithmetic mean of rates on Aaa bonds, short-term commercial paper, the prime rate, and (since 1949) mortgage rates for new housing. Basic source: *Economic Report of the President*, various years.

[4] "Real" interest rates: The nominal-rate mean interest rate minus year-on-year changes (averaged) in the consumer price index.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vestment in productive enterprise and, in a myriad of ways, rots the social order of capitalism. By contrast, the overall real interest rates of 1982 and early 1983 had reached the highest levels in exactly 50 years. As the hackneyed phrase has it, this was no accident.

"Democracy is in deficit." "We are taxed too much." These were the themes proclaimed by right-wing publicists and tax revolters as the 1970s came to a close. But in fact for decades after World War II, the *total* public-sector accounts usually had been in balance and sometimes even showed a surplus—not only in the "golden 1950s" but as late as 1978 and 1979 too. For in the latter years, state and local surpluses were more than enough to offset the federal deficit. Similarly, in 1976 the United States ranked 18th out of 23 relatively industrially advanced countries in taxation as a share (just over 30 percent for all levels—federal, state, municipal—of government) of the national product. Moreover, growth in this share over the preceding decade had been trivial—far less than three percent. And unlike the other 22 countries, we had an empire to run on these proceeds. It took the Reagan years to show what really unbalanced budgets look like, made up as they are of vast imperial rearmament and heavy tax cuts for the wealthy.

All of this would seem to be remarkably at variance with the common right-wing argument that the recklessly lavish government spending of yesteryear fueled inflation and undermined saving and investment. It was the creation of an economy saturated with debt in the *private* sector that, along with other characteristics of the American economic system, was largely responsible for the latter. But again, no matter. In an age where presidents are elected who believe in "supply-side" economics—that is, in getting something for nothing (though in different ways from similar urges among top policy-makers in the past)—almost anything can happen. Once again, the intellect in politics remains the servant of the various passions and interests, not their master. Indeed, we needed to wait for the Reagan years and policies to have structural federal deficits so large as to threaten all the dangers right-wing publicists had proclaimed as liberal evils for years—and others besides.

As far as we can untangle the situation, there were two issues underlying the rhetoric of 1980. The first was that the long-term deterioration of American economic performance had accelerated, reaching a crisis stage that seemed to threaten the very future of the system itself. This helps to account for the near-hysterical reactions of America's corporate and banking leaders to the economic and international upheavals that erupted in 1979 and '80. Social-harmony commitments made in an earlier period had become insupportable. With corporations and individuals "borrowed up" to the limit, profitability and productivity in deep decline, and investor returns zero or negative in real terms, one of the advanced capitalist world's lowest tax rates became an "intolerable burden."

The second issue, which is closely linked to the first, was that if the aggregate public-sector "take" had not changed very much over nearly a generation, the *internal composition* of expenditures had changed very radically, especially following America's withdrawal from Vietnam. Welfare spending and transfer payments to individuals rapidly increased while defense and other imperial expenditures declined almost enough to compensate for those increases. For the first time since World War II, the budget said that the warfare-welfare state had now become the welfare-warfare state. Since domestic government spending is far more controversial in America's capitalist political culture than imperial expenditures had been (at least until Vietnam came along), this was a sure recipe for an eruption of major political conflict over allocations. More than that: any substantial rebuilding of the imperial expenditure machinery would inevitably result in a massive increase in the GNP share of the public sector, unless the large-scale policy changes of the post-1970 budgetary era were more or less completely reversed. As I pointed out in a *Dissent* essay ("American Politics in the 1980s," Winter 1980), under the degenerating economic conditions prevailing then, and now, any such struggle to expand defense rapidly would have to take on an immediate zero-sum character; the more so the more rapidly top elites sought to expand the Pentagon's claim on national resources. This was perfectly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suited to the zero-sum class struggle, which was proclaimed, not merely in the Reagan administration's budgets, but even more in the three-year tax cut that it pushed through Congress in 1981, and most of all in the way the Administration and the Federal Reserve waged war on inflation.

Tory policies in Britain have been no less confrontational, no less a negation of the post-war social-harmony tradition. The underlying material causes are not so very different in the two countries, though the case of British capitalism is and long has been much more critical than that of American capitalism.

At this point, the manifest similarities come to an end. Here we must limit ourselves to asserting rather than "proving" that the collapse of the "collectivist consensus" in Britain led politically to the breakup of an opposition that was originally much more leftist and class-based than were the Democrats in this country. In an electoral system where the left and center each win one-quarter of the vote while the right gains nearly half, an overwhelming landslide for the right in terms of parliamentary seats is a foregone conclusion.

In the American case, there is no organized left to start with. What we find instead are two phenomena more or less unique to the Western world and intimately interconnected. The first is an "opposition" consisting of an amorphous collection of interest groups whose leadership drifts increasingly to the right in the search for a "mainstream." The second is a vast pool of nonvoters, nearly half of the citizenry in presidential years. Two-thirds of these Americans would have voted for Jimmy Carter in 1980 had they seen any reason to exert themselves to do so. This pool of nonvoters has grown very steadily over the past generation, and overwhelmingly at the Democrats' expense. It is one of the fascinations of American politics—and deeply revealing of the true position of the Democratic party in the American political system—that, in modern times, its elites have never made any committed effort (except regarding the civil-rights laws) to reach this natural clientele. And again, it should be stressed that—the special Southern case apart—a very large fraction of this nonvoting group *did* vote not so very long ago.

The runup to the 1984 campaign is already making it very clear that we need anticipate no major change in this respect. The two front-runners for the Democratic nomination most likely are Walter Mondale and John Glenn. Mondale, Carter's vice-president, seeks to pursue the traditional agendas of interest-group liberalism and presents himself as the "fair" and humane alternative to Ronald Reagan. His trump card, he hopes, will be the support of the organized labor movement, which is in serious trouble and widely unpopular. As for Senator Glenn, he hopes for nomination as a "Democratic Eisenhower," and—so far as one can tell from his voting record—he is not a great deal further to the left than the general was in his day.

The arguments for the one or the other are the usual empirical ones—to defeat Reagan by attempting to preempt the center of a rightward-shifting "mainstream." It is entirely characteristic of what is wrong with the Democratic leadership today that Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts—a man with a far more liberal voting record than Glenn—has seen fit to endorse him on just such "practical" grounds. Glenn himself has almost nothing visible to offer except his status as a hero and the fact that he is not Ronald Reagan. Since the quest for "ideas" on the Democratic side has thus far been a failure, the general party consensus appears to be that the 1984 campaign should blast away on the theme that Ronald Reagan and his team are "unfair." They are; but denigration in the absence of a coherent alternative is not enough and likely to fail.

The Democratic party, as currently constituted, in fact is incapable of embracing any political formula other than that of social harmony. Quite naturally, adherents of this traditional gospel repudiate "ideology." Their vision leaves no room for the possibility that serious conflict—among social classes, for example—may have become a permanent feature of a capitalist political economy in decline. So it follows that when the ex-Radical Right in power declares a domestic and international class war, the Democratic leadership simply

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cannot rise to the occasion by declaring war back. And indeed, how could the party of Jimmy Carter, Joseph Califano, Felix Rohatyn, John Glenn, and Walter Mondale ever do any such thing? The only alternative, it seems, is to soldier on and—like Mr. Micawber—wait for something to turn up. This is most unlikely to be a successful strategy in the 1980s at the crucial level of presidential elections, unless the economic crisis takes a really dramatic turn for the worse. What remains, then, is a political vacuum that begins somewhere not far left (and sociologically downward) from the core bases of Reagan's support and continues all the way across the spectrum.

At a more fundamental level, this enormous skew in the balance of organized political forces exists because capitalism is not just an economic system or a political economy; it is also a cultural system. In America, the hegemony of this culture is uncontested. It intersects with the very natural desire of most people, most of the time, to maintain a traditional system and way of life, rather than overthrow them. It intersects with the fundamental realities of geopolitics, the most important of which for most of this century has been the struggle between capitalist democracy (or democratic capitalism) and communism. In the mid-19th century, American politics became dominated by sectionalism: white Southerners, regardless of any conflicts they might have among themselves, lined up en masse against most white Northerners.

By the same token, the existence of a Communist "pole" in world politics, coupled with the emergence of a claimant Third World, has "sectionalized," internationally, the politics of class struggle in a way that totally confounds Marx's predictions. In this arena, most Americans across the class spectrum—and even most Britons—recognize themselves as "haves," with a great deal to lose, rather than as "have-nots." Assuming that a thoroughgoing reconstruction of the politico-economic order is called for, it is singularly difficult to detect the sources for the psychological or cultural freedom needed to undertake it through a leftist model borrowed from pre-1917 circumstances.

These considerations intersect with a persistent finding of public-opinion data in both Britain and America during the 1980s. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher share a vital political asset. They are widely perceived and respected as leaders who are firm, decisive, clean-cut in what they stand for and why, and unwilling to change course under the pressure of events. By the same token, and for many of the same reasons, Jimmy Carter retains an astonishingly intense unpopularity among respondents. In a crisis atmosphere, the initial public reaction is to hunker down and search for vigorous, decisive leadership. Someone has to be in charge of the store, and the most conspicuous fact in the pre-1979/1980 histories of both countries was that no one seemed to be in charge. Within the context of the American cultural scene, it helps Ronald Reagan very considerably that he is relaxed, at ease with people, and "folksy" in manner; for this makes any attempt to "demonize" him all the more difficult.

The politically organizable choices that exist in the United States are still limited to two. One is the centrist social-harmony alternative that more or less guarantees fuzzy, ineffective, and indecisive leadership. On the other side is a fundamentalist economic and imperial ideology associated with clarity and firmness of purpose, and a president determined to implement that ideology. In a crisis situation, the "center" fails to hold, and for a time the right becomes the only credible game in town. In the British crisis situation, on the other hand, the consequence of such stress has been the rupturing of the left and center into two warring and equal groups; for the center will not remain in alliance with a left that shifts further left under stress. In both cases, commitment to a revitalizing ideology has been associated with leaders whose commitment gives them the moral resources to lead. Ronald Reagan is widely perceived by the public as a *Mensch*; so is Mrs. Thatcher.

This analysis, it is hoped, casts some light on the remarkable ascendancy of the right in the 1980s and the equally remarkable paralysis of its opponents. It should not be extended in such a way as to suggest a foreclosure of the future.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In politics, as in the natural sciences, nature appears to abhor a vacuum. People in power, especially when they are ideologues, tend to go to extremes and, eventually, to crystallize effective oppositions against themselves by their own actions. Moreover, the internal contradictions of the Reagan program are enormous. They intersect with the vital constitutional fact that the United States executive branch functions so very differently from the "governments" of Great Britain and other countries. My judgment is that these and other factors are likely to produce politico-economic crises on a hitherto unimaginable scale at some point in this decade, though probably after rather than before the 1984 elections. An elaboration of the bases for this judgment must await another essay. In any case, it will not be possible for the public to keep blaming Jimmy Carter forever when things go wrong.

The most deeply worrisome feature of the whole situation is the growing threat of a major war between the United States and the Soviet Union. But this analysis must assume that such ultimate horror will be avoided, that Americans and the rest of humanity have a future, and that it is therefore worth the effort to analyze these things. To be sure, these latter considerations might well impel *anyone* not committed to Ronald Reagan's geopolitical and economic recipes to vote for *any* opponent, whether clear or fuzzy, whether interested in programs or merely in the politics of personal imagery.

For the pervasive feeling in Europe and in America that Reagan is not to be trusted, a feeling that undergirds and explains the rise of the nuclear-freeze movement both in Europe and America, is in my view credible if not well founded. There is reason to think that Reagan is far more politically vulnerable on this issue than on any economic question. Nevertheless, while this is not exclusively a "Washington" issue, it is unlikely that it could supply the missing ingredient for Democratic victory in 1984, unless the geopolitical situation worsens substantially and the president is widely blamed for the deterioration.

What are the "lessons," if any, in all this? I would posit three very simple ones. First, in the country of the blind, the one-eyed is king. When people in crisis seek coherence, program, ideas linked with action, they go where they can find them. In a given order, the places where they can find them are normally very few—and still fewer in the United States. Second, in the beginning was the idea. But, it should be added, the idea becomes prophecy armed, and therefore politically decisive, only when it is linked to passion, a commitment to and organization of concrete social groups, and when it reflects underlying reality. If the idea now in power fails to provide effective guidance for the state management of a political economy in deepening trouble, if it fails to provide a generally acceptable balance between capitalism and democracy, the ground will have been prepared for other ideas. It is very hard to see how that could occur within the Democratic party of today, or under the auspices of the "leadership" it will give us at San Francisco next year. But as always in a dynamic system of interaction, the actions of those in power will intersect with the hammer-blows of contingency to produce a different balance of forces and, therefore, different political outcomes than any we can easily imagine today. And this brings us to my last point, perhaps more a hope than a "lesson": it always seems darkest before the dawn. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Voice of Rebecca West

The young Rebecca West was a marvel. Born as Cicily Isabel Fairfield in 1892, she became a journalist in her youth for socialist and feminist publications. She wrote with verve, humor, and energy; she was a wicked polemicist; she didn't hesitate to attack stuffed shirts on the left as well as those on the right. She wasn't yet in, say, 1912, the famous writer she would later become, but she was writing then with a sharpness of thought and phrase she would never surpass.

We print here two essays she wrote for the socialist publication The Clarion *in 1912: they are as fresh, I think, as if they had been written yesterday, indeed, a good deal fresher than some things that were written yesterday. We are grateful to the Viking Press for permitting us to take these essays from* The Young Rebecca *by Dame Rebecca West and Jane Marcus. Text copyright © 1982 by Rebecca West. Editorial selection and introduction copyright © 1982 by Jane Marcus. Reprinted by arrangement with the Viking Press.* — I. H.

Women and Wages

Blacklegging and Timidity

October 18, 1912

In the *Daily Citizen* of October 9 there was a sentimental quotation, seemingly of feminist import, from the *Shipping World*. A new Act in the States has decreed that every vessel navigating on the American coast or the Great Lakes must carry a wireless [telegraph] operator; and it furthermore provides that women are eligible to qualify as operators.

> And why not? [asks the *Shipping World*.] The invention opens out a new career for women, in which their special abilities can be used to the best advantage. If acuteness of hearing, rapidity of decision and suppleness of wrist and fingers count for anything, then, surely, the Marconi house on the bridge deck seems to be the natural goal for a self-reliant woman with cool nerves and efficient brain.

It is an alluring picture, and one flattering to women. In the mind's eye one sees the Marconi operator sitting gracefully at her work, with a rose in her hair, surrounded by votive offerings from passengers, operating much, much better than any mere man ever did. And, apart from the *Shipping World*'s idealisation of the prospects, it does seem an interesting new occupation for women. Women have had to settle down to occupations which were too tame for men and in which there are few opportunities for the adventurous-minded. The young woman who wants to see over the edge of the world would probably love the life of a wireless operator.

Yet, "I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts," said the one wise Trojan, when he saw his fellow-Trojans dragging the wooden horse into Troy. I fear the Marconi Company even when they bring gifts.

Ah! Here we have it. Here is the powder in the jam, the snake in the grass, the wolf in feminist's clothing. I thought there must be some reason for this sudden lyric outburst of feminist enthusiasm. "Probably she will be less expensive to the shipowner than the male operator, and quite as reliable." One might have remembered that the capitalist respects woman in only one capacity; not as the worker or the wife or the mother, but as the blackleg. That takes the pride out of the working woman. If she becomes a Marconi operator on these terms, no matter how efficient and plucky she

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

may be, she is living on the wages of dishonour. She has bought her job with the flesh and blood of her fellow man.

Though it is galling for the woman worker to know that she is not loved for herself alone, she may get a good deal of satisfaction out of the encouraging words that are let fall by the capitalist on the make. For instance, there was that remarkable wave of feminism that passed over local authorities four years ago, when they became obliged to appoint school medical officers. All over the country councillors enthusiastically declared to one another that it was imperative that children should be attended to by women; that men were far too coarse and tactless to deal with them; that every woman (even though she be a doctor) is a mother at heart . . . and that while men doctors were asking £250 a year they could probably get women for £150. The wiles of the municipal seducers were in vain. Women doctors, being in the main middle-class women, had savings and homes to fall back on; so they stood loyally by their male colleagues and refused to blackleg. Not one woman doctor in Great Britain applied for a £150 post. And there was an abrupt subsidence in the wave of feminism among local authorities.

What reason is there that women should play the part of blacklegs? The underpayment of women is one of those "ninepence for fourpence" tricks that capitalists have ever loved to play on the people whenever they had the chance. Capitalists have said to women: "We deduct fourpence from your wages so that we can pay men larger wages, and then they can support you as their wives. So in the end you will make at least ninepence out of it." It is only an excuse for sweating more money out of the people. It pretends that women have no dependents. A woman, according to the capitalist, is an air bubble blown between earth and sky, with no human ties of any sort. True it is that man recognises that first imperative necessity which is plain to the lowest savage, the duty to provide for the next generation. But there is another duty that is patent only to the more civilised (if one was a really bitter feminist, one might say that that was why it fell to the women), and that is the duty to provide for the old. Miss Grace Neal, of the Domestic Workers' Union, states that it is the rule and not the exception for the members of her union to send money home to support their parents. And sometimes widowhood lays the burden of both generations on a woman.

Women ought to understand that in submitting themselves to this swindle of underpayment, they are not only insulting themselves, but doing a deadly injury to the community. The capitalist sucks strength out of an exploited class, which enables him to exploit other classes. An example of the infectiousness of poverty and the persistence of disease is the terrible economic condition of Edinburgh, which is directly due to the Battle of Flodden Field in 1513. Most of the able-bodied men were killed off and their widows had to set about earning a living for their fatherless children. They got "woman's wages." That meant that wages all round were depressed, and capitalism in Edinburgh got a good hold over labour by planting its feet on a solid substratum of the blackest and most helpless poverty. Labour has never shaken itself free.

How can women bear to be willing instruments of this crime against themselves and the community? The industrial women seem to consent to the indignity without resentment. Every woman who has risen from the floral stage of political activity (that is, the Primrose League), or the vegetable stage (that is, the Women's Liberal Association), must admire the suffragettes. Yet we may wish that they had spared a little of their dear irreverence and blessed pluck to stir up the industrial women to revolt. We have clever Miss Pankhurst trying to get the vote and earnest Miss Macarthur trying to organise trade unions; but seemingly we have no women who have read the signs of the times, who have discovered that political power and trade unionism are pinpricks in the hide of the capitalist monster. Where are our women syndicalists?

Ladies of Great Britain, we are clever, we are efficient, we are trustworthy, we are twice the women that our grandmothers were, but we have not enough devil in us. We are afraid of going back to first causes. We want to earn good wages. But we try to do it by being amenable and competent wage slaves, and thus pleasing the capitalist. We never try to do it by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fighting the capitalist and turning him out of the workshop. The other day Mr. Ramsay MacDonald complained that women do not make good enough socialists for him. The whole trouble is that women make socialists which are just good enough for Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. They accept as doles from the capitalist class what they should take as rights. Wherever one gets a gathering of women socialists, one gets a programme of such charity gifts from the state as free meals and school clinics for children: excellent things, but dangerous unless taken discontentedly as niggardly installments of a long-due debt. They should watch such things critically lest their children grow up in servitude. A slave is more of a slave when he is well fed than when he is hungry.

It is strange that women who are independent and fearless in private life should not introduce their independence and fearlessness into their public life. This occurs to me especially in connection with elementary-school-teachers. The cheerfulness with which they have shouldered the responsibilities thrown on them by the free meals and medical examination of schoolchildren explains why the children love their school and their teachers. Yet they submit to being paid salaries of from one-half to two-thirds the amount paid to men for similar work. They submit in spite of the fact that they could end the injustice in a week by a strike. What could the government do if women teachers struck? There are no hungry teachers walking the streets, so degraded by poverty that—God forgive them and punish the capitalists—they will help to drag their fellows down to poverty, too, by blacklegging. The women teachers of England have their remedy in their own hands.

Yet not only do they not use it, but they consent to remain members of a quaint body called the National Union of Teachers [NUT], which, although it exacts an equal subscription from men and women alike, maintains this principle of unequal payment. The scale which it suggests for certificated class-teachers is quite a humorous little effort. Apparently the male class[room]-teacher is intended to get married at once, as his minimum salary is higher than the female's. True, the difference is but £10, but the maintenance of a family can be the only excuse for any difference at all. His maximum salary is £200 against the female's £160. Puzzle: if the NUT thinks a class-teacher can keep a wife on the £10 surplus, how many children does it expect him to rear on the £40 surplus? Surely the birth rate can't be going down!

I am no teacher, but I don't think much of that union. I like to get value for my money, and a union that takes my money and does not give me equal benefits with my fellow unionist is no use to me. Decidedly the women members of the NUT ought to withdraw their support from their ungracious colleagues and form a union of their own.

But what is the explanation of the meekness which makes such impositions on women possible? It is perhaps nothing disgraceful to ourselves, nothing that need make us doubt our worthiness as citizens of the ideal state. Nietzsche says that a man who is aiming at Supermanhood passes through three phases: the camel, the lion, and the child. At first the soul becomes mastered by the idea of duty and self-sacrifice. It desires to be a preserver of life. Thus far have women gone. They've had no time to travel further, having left the home so recently. "But when the camel is loaded, it goeth to the desert, and there it is transformed

ARE YOU MOVING?

•

Second-class publications are *not* forwarded by your Post Office, but returned (at senders' expense) to be repackaged and reshipped: . . . *Three postage payments, for us, plus weeks of delay.* . . .

To avoid this, and help DISSENT, *please notify us one month in advance of your change of address.* Send both old and new address to:

•

DISSENT, 521 Fifth Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into a lion." The soul finds that the life for which it has sacrificed itself is in its present state hardly worthy of preserving. It turns to rend and destroy life, that out of its wreck it may make a new and more beautiful life. To this stage have men come.

Let women make haste to become lions, and fearlessly attack the social system. So that together men and women may be transformed for the last time into the child, who, untroubled with the consciousness of material things, is concerned only with love and happiness.

A New Woman's Movement

The Need for Riotous Living

December 20, 1912

Perhaps if I had been a railway shareholder I should have been more interested in the case of Driver Knox. For those who know about these things tell me that a man who can get drunk on two small rums must have an economical nature, and would probably make the company's coal go twice as far as anybody else would. But the real interest of the case lay in the determination of his employers to buy their employee, body and soul, off duty as well as on duty. If Driver Knox had caught measles, the company would have remained calm; but they became anxious when he imperilled his immortal soul.

This anxiety can very often be detected in the relationship between masters and men, and is a curious form of penitence. The rich perceive that they are giving the poor a very bad time in this world. But that is quite irremediable, and probably, since the heavens permit it, ought to be. So they coerce the poor into virtue, and thus make them sure of a good time in the next world.

One sees this attempt to provoke piety in the poor in orphanages and other charitable institutions where the inmates are quite defenceless. A year or two ago I went to see a village home for little girls that lay somewhere in the flat dullness past Barking. It was a very ugly place. Little mud-coloured brick villas, flanked by spiky evergreens that looked dusty with boredom, looked over flat lawns and fields at other little mud-coloured villas. The children seemed well nourished and not unhappy, though it was strange that all—except those who had been disfigured by disease—were designed for domestic service. No woman could believe that all those little girls had the right temperament for that occupation. And this tendency to regard little girls as made by the gross from the same pattern prepared one for the hard deficiencies of the institution. There was not a fleshly vanity in the place. There were no pictures on the walls; no lost ladies of old years to kindle the imagination with their beauty, no vision of other countries and the past. There were no good books even for the older girls, only sentimental tracts that were really inflated prospectuses of the simplicity of the Christian life. And the austerity of the furniture passes description; in its gauntness it reminded one of the ribs of a London bus horse.

It is no use saying that the funds of the institution will not run to luxuries. If the benevolent take on the responsibilities of these children's lives they must be prepared to give them "bread and roses," not merely "crust and cabbages." And yet I have a suspicion that roses are not considered good for the indigent. For it is strange to note with what hostility the rich look on the timid attempts of the poor to grow some roses. The mildest amusements of the rich become the vices of the poor. The canon's lady who holds the district where I live in the hollow of her hand forbids waltzing in the local girls' club, on the ground that the initiation of the sinful pleasure would ultimately lead them to low dancing-halls. She shows no penitence at having let the world get into such a rotten state

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that there are no healthy amusements left to the poor. But there are acidities quite unconnected with any fear of immorality. It is amazing how angrily the well-to-do speak of the poor girl's love of finery. Yet there is really something very hopeful about the pert face of a Cockney beauty, smiling at life from under a wide and worthless hat tipped with nodding, spurious plumes. She is a better rebel than the girl who accepts her poverty as a matter of fate and wears its more durable badge of drab garments and sailor hats, for she perceives that life ought to be hung with flags, and that the ugliness of the world is a stupid convention. A similar idealism moves the waitress who, twittering like a little London sparrow, quite ridiculous, quite charming, carries on a flirtation under the sour gaze of her customers. Her subconsciousness has reasoned that the Creator cannot have destined her to spend ten hours a day bringing unpleasant food to people she doesn't know or care twopence about for five shillings a week, while he may have destined her to love and be loved. I admire these attempts to get on with the business of life in spite of the absurdities of civilisation.

The relations between the rich and the poor are often paralleled by the relations between men and women, and it is so in this case. For the working woman is invited by men to lead, as the price of their respect, a grey life of unexuberant decorum and contempt of all the good frivolities of the earth. That is the real meaning of the mysterious sentence, heard sometimes from the unregenerate: "Women don't need such big wages as men, because they have a lower standard of comfort." It obviously does not mean what it says, for it is obvious that everybody wants as much comfort as they can get. If I refuse to give up my seat in the tube to a woman with a baby on the ground that, because she went to an elementary school when she was young and I went to a secondary school, she has a lower standard of comfort, I am not only a cad, but also an unimaginative liar. My motive would be pure selfishness. And pure selfishness is the motive of men's desire to repress women. Anti-feminists, from Chesterton down to Dr. Lionel Tayler, want women to specialise in virtue. While men are rolling round the world having murderous and otherwise sinful adventures of an enjoyable nature, in commerce, exploration, or art, women are to stay at home earning the promotion of the human race to a better world. This is illustrated by the middle-class father who never goes to church himself, but always sends his wife and daughters. But the highest form of virtue men can imagine is asceticism. But it happens that ascetics are "gey ill to live wi' "; they absolve their wives from the sacred duty of renunciation of all fleshly vanities and, supported by some lingering memory of the old Catholic idea that a woman ought either to be a wife or a nun, put it all on the spinster.

The schoolmistress is an example of this enforced asceticism. She does work of the highest importance, requiring not only a brain, but a heart. For the work she has done in the elementary schools in connection with the Free Meals and Medical Inspection of schoolchildren she can claim to be among the most efficient and humane public officials we have. We ought almost to allow her special privileges. But instead we bully her into an elaborate pretence that she is not a human being at all, but some undecorative kind of vegetable. We impose on her a tradition that she ought to dress dowdily. We turn her out of her school if she takes any prominent part in political affairs, although we are worse than foolish if we want our children to be brought up by a mind so vacuous that it has no political opinions. If we are well-to-do, we object to her continuing to teach after she has proved herself human by marrying. And we underpay her miserably, so that she wastes half her efficiency in trying to make ends meet, as one tires oneself out trying to hold on to a large hat in a gale. When she is in training at college she is underfed. But then, of course, wherever women are gathered together for the purpose of work their spirits are tamed by partial starvation. The students at Newnham and Girton are weakened (some of them for life) by underdone joints and rice puddings. In YWCAs the boiled egg is of more importance than it ought to be, and there seems far too much bread-and-butter in the world. Nurses in hospital usually enjoy a diet much too unpalatable and restricted for any better-class child of ten. The air of extreme solemnity possessed by many professional and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

business women is largely due to overfamiliarity with milk puddings.

Another aspect of the artificial asceticism of woman is the sacrifice of personal liberty she has to make before she can get a respectable roof over her head. If she is sufficiently prosperous to avoid the slums she must go to a YWCA and whatever her private convictions may be, step into an evangelical *mise-en-scène*. She may be fortunate enough to find a comfortable branch, but she may chance on one where the founders—although the YWCA is not run at a loss, and the inmates owe nothing to charity—gratify their appetite for vicarious piety. They rip phrases from the Gospels and hang them on the walls in the starkness of black print, unmitigated by the presence of other pictures. They insist on public prayer at certain hours. Public prayer at half-past eight in the morning, with the cold light falling through a basement window on to the dirty cups and saucers on the breakfast table, promotes atheism more effectively than all the publications of the rationalist press. And those of us with passions for going to suffrage meetings and music-halls—both excellent enthusiasms—must restrain ourselves, for we must not stay out later than half-past ten. But there we are in the same position as the inmates of "philanthropic" institutions such as Hopkinson House (which pays a sleek five per cent), who, although they may be women of forty holding responsible educational positions, must not dare to stay out a moment longer.

Decidedly what we need is a militant movement for more riotous living. Schoolmistresses must go to their work wearing suffrage badges and waving the red flag. The ladies of Hopkinson House must stay out till two in the morning, and then come back and sing outside till the doors are opened. And we must make a fuss about our food. "The milk pudding must go" shall be our party cry. I can see in the future militant food raids of the most desperate character.

I see the inmates of the YWCA inflamed with text-burning on Hampstead Heath, pelting the central offices with bread-and-butter and threatening a general massacre of hens if the boiled egg persists in prominence. Armies of nurses would visit the homes of the hospital governors and forcibly feed them with that horrid breakfast dish, porridge and treacle. And in Simpson's some day the blenching stockbroker shall look down the muzzle of the rifle and hand over his nice red-and-black beefsteak to his pale typist. . . . Wages would go up then.

But that is a dream. But not an unromantic one. The modern psychological theory of insanity states that impulses can never be killed, but only scotched; and if one denies an impulse its natural outlet, it will find an unnatural outlet. It may be that the repression of the animal in woman, with its desires for food and freedom and comfort, accounts for her greater liability to nervous irritability and hysteria. If so, then what has always been a racial danger is becoming more and more dangerous every day, as women take more and more part in the world's business. Many of the evils of our social system spring from perversities that arose when all education and much of the land was in the hands of monks and nuns who were professedly leading unnatural lives of repression. And in the same way the lady—who is simply the well-repressed woman—may be a source of danger to the state. So that though the doormat type of anti-suffragist is disgusted by the women who struggle for material comfort for themselves, we are doing sound service to the state by our selfishness. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

George Konrád

Censorship & State-Owned Citizens

We are pleased to print the first English translation of this essay by the distinguished Hungarian novelist, author of The Case Worker, The City Builder, *and* The Loser. —Eds.

Hungary lost her independence four and a half centuries ago and has not regained it since. There was always a great power nearby that kept occupying troops on our soil in peacetime and held our people under its sway with the surefire arguments of superior force. What is more, agreement among the great powers made certain that even the more intimate aspects of our daily lives would be governed by a dreary military status quo. After the Second World War we turned from a German to a Russian sphere of interest; instead of taking lessons in autonomy we still attend schools run by censors.

In our part of the world imperial interests were always deemed more important than the principles of popular rule and representative government. Here rational arguments always succumbed before brute force—this is the difference between us and people in the West; compared to them we are hypocritical and cynical. In any given period the elite of our country, the majority of this elite at any rate, considered cooperation with the occupiers the more reasonable alternative. Let's act as though we were voluntarily giving up our freedoms, they said, and then winked: we'll steal it back bit by bit anyway. But only in very tiny bits, said the radical minority. Each historical period had its share of crushed armed rebellions, its own struggles for national and societal sovereignty. Over the past few centuries the cycles of numbness, compromise, reform, revolution were repeated at more or less regular intervals.

The local overlords, approved above and abroad, perpetuated a system of dependent relationships and ruled over an intimidated (and, after a while, plainly timid) society that sulked and grumbled to show its dissatisfaction, and began cultivating the symbols of its glorious past and overblown national myths. Before long, however, a reform movement would emerge and then, inevitably, what the reformers were never prepared for: an adventure turned bloody revolution.

In 1795 some of Hungary's finest intellectuals had their heads chopped off by censorship because they dared to put forward the notion, in their illegally circulated, "samizdat" pamphlets, that censorship as such was passé.* It isn't, it seems, even today, for in 1982 I could not get this little essay published in Budapest. I should like to ask the Hungarian censorship authorities to refute what will follow below by publishing it in any Hungarian periodical and appending to it a few rebuttals by the most formidable champions of their ideology. Prove that my pessimism is unfounded, I say to them. But I am afraid that this dandy opportunity to demonstrate the openness of Hungarian intellectual life will be allowed to slip by unnoticed.

In "state socialism," the formal separation between state and society breaks down; citizens make their living in state-run enterprises, few

* The reference is to an ill-fated conspiracy of Hungarian Jacobins, led by Ignác Martinovics. — Translator.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lives remain outside state control—there is virtually no neutral ground. What you have is a society of men and women censored by, and beholden to, the state. Censorship is an integral part of the political structure of "state socialism," as well as of the state-owned individual's personality. This new type of citizen will say and do nothing for which he might lose his state-given job, or which might incur the displeasure of officials of state security. He has learned from experience that if he wants to live in peace he must lie, or at least not say in public what he is used to saying privately.

State culture is censorship in practice that becomes, after a while, part of one's character makeup. The transformation may be gradual or speedy. Anyone working for the organs of communication, for instance, will become state-owned that much quicker, for if he doesn't, he loses ground, is cut off. But no matter how committed a state employee he becomes, once in a while he will entertain thoughts that contradict state-sanctioned notions of reality. If he expresses them, he arouses suspicion; but if he swallows them too often, he will get sick or go crazy.

During the Stalinist years censorship was positive, aggressive; today it's negative and defensive. At that time you were told what to say; now you're only advised what not to say. With slow and persistent labor, society kept widening the circle of permitted partial truths; the space around us got bigger. But we are still fenced in. The entire state culture, from the nurseries on up to the academies, is bent on convincing us that true freedom can be found only within the fold. Here dishonorable as well as decent men and women learn to lie expertly, conscientiously—for the sake of their families, their profession, their country. They go out of their way to teach their children that it is wrong, an act of folly, to say what you think.

Censorship is present even when the subject at hand has nothing to do with politics. Each institution in society is part of the hierarchy. Subordinate relationships are correct and therefore "socialist in spirit"; those based on equality are incorrect and "antisocialist." The relationship between manager and underling, but also between doctor and patient, pupil and schoolteacher, becomes a course in censorship. And the object of this course is general stupidity—to discourage people from thinking.

In a totalitarian situation censorship can never be formalized. The powers that be cannot describe in legal terms what must not be said; therefore censorship must always operate in an intimate semidarkness. It is irritated most when it's pinned down. When people are afraid of it, it is secure; when they grow bold it becomes frightened. When this stage is reached, people begin to talk about it, study it, violate it, ridicule it.

In such an atmosphere many works are born about which it's hard to say whether or not they are publishable. The lower-ranking officials shift the onus of decision-making onto their superiors. The censors have more work than they can handle, their vigilance flags—before they know it they, too, are seduced by an unfettered thought and let it slip through their fingers. The chief censor might, as a personal favor, allow a stubborn author to publish something that a suspicious and dogmatic subordinate already rejected. But in return he expects his author to support him unconditionally when he has it out with the other high-ranking censors. If there is censorship it's very important to know what sort of people the censors are—we can go on discussing them endlessly.

Today's censorship doesn't require that you be enthusiastic about everything. Depression is the official state disease. Nobody will think ill of you if you feel helpless. Under Stalin you were a rebel if you felt sad or spoke of pain; now you are suspect if you smile. Today's censor is no longer obsessed. If anything he is sluggish and listless; he steers clear of extremes, his words are soft, unctuous, conspiratorial. He doesn't come up with too many new ideas, and he doesn't want you to badger him with new ideas either. Thirty years ago the censors were strong and society, harried, beleaguered, was weak. Now society has regained its strength and the censors are weighed down by ennui. Thus on our inner stage the dialogue between censorship and anti-censorship will not break off. This dialogue is Beckettian right now, perhaps it will become Chekhovian, and some day—who knows?—it may even be Shakespearean. For there does come a magic moment when suddenly there are enough peo-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ple who have had it with grumbling hopelessness. This moment usually marks the beginning of a new era.

For as long as I can remember, living under censorship has not been much fun; what it is, in fact, is a slow wearing away. It's faces turned dull by fear and overadjustment; it's eyes telling you: ill-conceived, ill-advised, ill-timed. Not a day goes by without my having to listen to something concerning censorship. I have to think of it even when I don't want to; I am made to feel its heavier atmospheric pressure. The dankness cuts through me—I, too, have grown heavy with fatigue. I no longer submit my writings for publication; I do not feel like defending, or mourning, sentences marked for deletion. But all of this is mere fantasizing, of course; I am a banned, blacklisted writer.

Greetings, tiny microphone, concealed up there in the ceiling of my village hideaway. There is an ear up there that hears my every sigh. Hitting the keys of a typewriter or talking into a recorder under it can be a terrific challenge. There are people who are interested in my work; they'd like to know how my mind operates—they're real readers. I like to think that with their files and cassettes they are working at the behest of some future literary critic. If so, I can only wish that my state-appointed secretary will be sufficiently diligent. The more forgetful I become, the more I count on his thoroughness. Please commit to paper my chitchats, my telephone conversations, I feel like telling him; put me in the archives so that I could consider myself a significant enough part of the system. Without my grasshopper ways you couldn't be antlike in your industry. Someone like me is your reason for being. I lounge about and dillydally, and this justifies major expenditures by a reputable organization. "I am being observed," I write. "He writes he is being observed," they write.

A perfect symbiosis. They think I am dangerous, I think they are; chances are neither of us is. Playing our respective roles we step in front of the curtain—the audience is posterity. In a way, my secretive notetakers are in a better position than that future literary historian; they are my contemporaries and are engaged in actual fieldwork. They climb up to the attic of this house, rummage in the dust, wait around for hours in their cars, listen to all that futile talk—they work hard for their morsel of information. State power strips me bare: I try to profit from it. I see and hear myself as an outsider would, I become my own spy. If they rob me of my secrets, if I am banned, what else could I do but identify, openly, without pretense, with that in me which is forbidden.

I am steeped in censorship even as I am struggling against it. There is talk of it constantly: whose work didn't make it, what got through, who got by? Another time perhaps, another place, someone says in a resigned drawl. In place of completed works we get exchanges of gossip and petty backbiting. Many a fine mind, destined for greater achievements, studiously avoids the depths and the heights. Parents and children pay tribute daily on the altar of censorship for it is responsible, after all, for family happiness, the vacations abroad, the security of their cozy mousehole. The husband censors his wife, she censors him, and both of them work on their child who is already tired from having been censored by the teacher.

I run into an acquaintance on the street. No job? he asks. Not getting published? No one's telling you what to do? Why, then you can think of the craziest things. An old friend comes up to me, smiles, proffers his hand, then, somewhat flustered, hurries away. They leave you alone? another asks. When I tell him they do, he seems a little disappointed and says good-bye in a hurry. Censorship can be found in the awkward movements of bodies, in the ungainliness of clothes, in the sluggishness of thoughts, the timidity of the imagination, in humor turned sour, in the hind thoughts wheezing through spoken words.

The nation-state is capable of nationalizing everything within its boundaries, including the interior monologues of passersby on the street. The all-powerful state surrounds our soft, amorphous lives and gives them shape; it offers ambition usable pathways, it provides self-importance with means of expression, anxiety with a thousand causes. Centralized control is not a demon but merely a form, one that has never been more malleable; the culture it cre-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ated, thanks in part to the talents of liberal reformers, is more interesting, more variegated than any in recent memory. The state is secure enough to let police operations be preventive rather than punitive. With new economic policies and toned-down television messages they still reach into our brains, but they do it gently now, with an expert touch.

As the state is stronger, it gives its citizens greater leeway, so a moderate free-thinker in a mature "state-socialist" society can be as self-satisfied as a marcher in a victory parade. The state leaves room even for some opposition—and why not? The dissenters themselves are permeated by the state; they are up against it as much as the more submissive citizens who have learned to close their eyes to certain things. The civilization created by these citizens is an enduring historical reality with a long past, and doubtless a long future too, since it keeps turning out new versions of its pride and joy: the state-owned man, in whose name the state turns thumbs down on a tolerant, pluralist society.

Censorship chills and enfeebles, it slows me down and sticks to my skin as I plow through it endlessly. Censorship is reality and also the essence of reality. If I am a realist I must describe censorship, this perennial infancy, this self-perpetuating lie, this mist of fear through which we can no longer see the thing itself. It's the primary tool of the system, without which the system cannot exist. Yet censorship is never some distant authority, it's you, always you.

Censorship is not just repression and retribution, not just an enemy stronghold that we professional truth-sayers make assaults on, but the mode of operation of our hearts and minds, the content of our dreams, the inventory of our ideas. We are poisoned by it, though it might just be our natural element, our health, our only morality. Is there anyone alive in whose mind censorship could not find an ally, an instigator? We may despise it but still we flaunt it. It's not that bad to live under censorship; you get used to it, says an inner voice. It sharpens our sensibilities, tunes our ears. Someone speaks and we know exactly what he holds back. We are reassured by our gentleness, our hesitancy, our resignation. We cling to each other in the warm, dim light; we are dreamers, secret connivers. We recognize censorship in our neuroses, in our alarmed reaction to forthrightness, in our sentimental conversations, which invariably justify our cowardice with some high-minded argument. Just how many overrefined minds are here, all in a heap, who cannot speak without resorting to riddles and indirections? But do listen to them more carefully: behind the pretentious academic-aesthetic lingo, rabbit souls shudder.

Why should it be shameful to trick a superior force? asks the censored mind. Can we really be certain that what is true is good and what is not true is bad? Truth and lies together create a civilization, and truth blooms when locked in battle with untruth. Why should we reduce an open-ended riddle to a single solution? Why allow ourselves to be at the mercy of those who wield power? People who are subject to punishment dissemble and play dumb irresistibly, with artistic fervor, lest the criminal investigators find out everything about them. We are all subject to punishment, and we would all like to escape detection. It would be crazy, an act of self-punishment, to denounce ourselves. . . . There is no convincing counterargument, only the insignificance of secretive works, which share just one secret: censorship.

The state-owned citizen is political even if he is apolitical. He knows exactly what he mustn't say and this makes him predictable, transparent. The state-owned man derives from the state; it's the state that makes him tick. Everything about him is statelike: his spine, his subconscious, his quivering knee, his crumpled face, his narrowing lips, his eyes, in which there is little wonderment and much suspicion. He can be recognized from afar, in strange surroundings—he looks exactly like a Central European state-owned man. A child is a future state official, an old man is a retired state official. Even the way people commit adultery or enjoy their vacations, the way they joke and deliver speeches identifies them as state-owned men and women.

The be-all and end-all of the state-owned citizen is his state-granted job, which he might lose, or at least be made to fear that he might. Clearly there are various ways of disciplining a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

refractory citizen—from cutting down his privileges and restricting him professionally to charging him formally with a crime. With a little understanding of human psychology, punishment can be meted out judiciously, as needed, so that the perpetrator of verbal crimes, the slanderer, the speaker of blunt truths will take fright and in a fit of self-criticism beg for forgiveness. By the time he grows old, the state-owned man becomes—in his sleep as well as during his waking hours—an obedient, well-behaved child. What other choice does he have? If an independent private economy barely exists, how are those in the opposition supposed to make ends meet? Political democracy is achieved when even dissidents who don't get a penny from the state can make a living. In a statist society the government official represents the norm, the person who counts on being promoted, who would rather be in the hub of things than on the sidelines.

If the state employee becomes too conceited he may break the officially sanctioned rules of the game and lose the good will of his superiors. This is the beginning of the end for him. Placed in quarantine, he becomes an unaffiliated—and very nervous—individual who views his isolation not as the natural confines of his independence but as a kind of impairment. Even after finding cover in the small community of similarly punished citizens, he feels a certain nostalgia for the state-approved reality he left behind, for he feels that it is the true reality, and his own, in the hours of extreme anxiety, seems no more than an oppressive illusion. It takes a long time for the outcast to realize that reality is always where he happens to be.

Since there are no private publishing firms, there are no private authors either, only authors of unpublished manuscripts. The state-approved writer submits his work to the state publishing house; if it doesn't disturb the state spirit too much, it gets published. The work can be pessimistic, that's permitted nowadays—the state-owned man is frequently pessimistic. What the writer can't do is see and talk straight, for that a state-owned man can never afford to do. There are so many other approaches and moods, the reluctant writer is told. Let him give voice to his moral struggles, and let him, above all, take his job to be his calling and prove his mettle with unremitting zeal. If he does, then he deserves to be called a first-rate state-sponsored man, and be seen on television making statements and reminiscing, and doing it much more solemnly and dully than he would in a private gathering. Then, from the safety of commemorative programs, he could look out at his audience even after his death. The official favorite should love the cloying medium of statist paternalism; if he gets a little nauseous he ought to choose an illness for himself, commit suicide, but never ought he to rebel against his role.

Nowadays the state-owned man no longer must be afraid of purges; a bureaucratic fate need not be irrational any more. If he should err, and not be stubborn about his error, his peers will bail him out, and with a maternal gesture help him return to the fold. The chief controllers will gently subdue those guilty of none-too-serious intellectual breaches, and permit them to find a place again in the hierarchy—perhaps on a lower level. The official intelligentsia enjoys quite a bit of security; its members' careful choice of words bespeaks aesthetic discrimination. They screen their words with quiet dignity, like a Confucian monk, wisely keeping back much of what they know. It's never really necessary, or very elegant, to reveal everything all at once. The official intellectuals' compensation is knowing that this world is theirs, with all its secret intrigues and scheming, with its handpicked favorites jockeying for vacant positions, with its excitement over who'll be the new boss, whose star is rising, whose is on the decline.

The state-owned individual is never bored; daily reports from the labyrinths of officialdom engage his political fantasies and passions. He wonders, *sub specie aeternitatis*, whether to stab that idiot X. in the back or join his entourage, since Y. is an even bigger ass. The state-owned man is not ashamed of submitting in a disciplined manner to censorship, and will utter his platitudes only with permission from above. Why should he feel ashamed? For doing his duty? His job is to pretend there is no censorship. One mustn't blab about long-standing inner constraints in front of hostile outsid-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ers. He guards his incognito with cool formality. This is the price—indeed the beauty—of his survival.

The state-owned citizen may ease his conscience by helping those who erred to get back into officialdom's good graces. Hands reach out of the state pyramid toward these prodigal sons and pull them back into the system. There are always good friends on the scene who persuade potential dissidents to come to their senses and stick to the rules; this way they can make it to the top once more. The state-owned man helps others become what he is. With an air of gravity or with exaggerated levity, he teaches those around him to respect the interests of the state, or at least to go through the motions. It's not a hard lesson to learn: in official places you look concerned; when hearing the first-person plural, you count yourself in; you accept the presence of party headquarters above you and it, in turn, will accept you.

You may extend the boundaries of the state culture, and fit in ideas that are rather alien to it; you may even play up its intimate goings-on, but you mustn't disturb the structure itself. Any state-owned man with a vision will, during the course of his career, try to perfect the art of tightening and of relaxing censorship. He will be permitted to make liberal concessions if in key questions he proves to be unbending. The state-owned man is no worse than a regular citizen, only different. He does have his own ethics—after all, there are all sorts of ways in which he can exercise his share of state power. The important thing is to be able to defer to a common and only intuitively perceptible, state-manipulated superego. It is this abstract father whose loyal and abstract son he must be.

Since the state-owned man is the model or norm, the autonomous man is the deviant. His approach to things is never in keeping with the larger interests of the state, thus he is either guilty or insane. Putting it more kindly: he is confused, misguided, an extremist. Or putting it more severely: he is antisocial, a mental case. Most of his fellow citizens consider him a romantic, a utopian dreamer with a warped sense of reality, who can't see where he lives and runs his head against a brick wall—serves him right if he winds up with a cracked skull. If this is how the majority sees him, he, too, will be inclined to believe something is wrong with him. Anywhere else he'd be considered perfectly normal, but when he is among the state-owned, or when he is particularly despondent, he feels like a misfit.

There are independent-minded people, however, who enjoy being what they are. Their serenity is unshakable, and they exercise their freedom as though that were their main occupation. Not even carefully devised harassment can break their spirits, even though the state machinery would love to see them sullen, would like them to feel out of sorts and prove with their sour faces that it's not advisable to defy the state. If the number of these independent-minded citizens keeps growing, a counter-model emerges, which has its own attraction, its own magic. Above a certain rate of frequency, the speed with which independent initiatives spread tends to accelerate. In response, the state-owned citizen experiences dramatically his own schizophrenia, and can no longer withdraw into his comfortable stupor. What the state culture shielded him from most is about to happen: he discovers that there are other ways to live, other alternatives, and it's not hopeless to ponder them. He feels the warmth of dissident solidarity and begins to respect independent thinkers everywhere, who, because their knowledge of the terrain is up-to-date, are always cheerfully alert, always in shape.

The state-owned man who is on his way to liberation learns that speaking the truth creates a climate of truth and once he starts, others follow suit. Where somebody quits the censorship game whose cardinal rule is that you don't let on it exists, others are encouraged to do the same. It's a moral contagion, a revolution, like the change in Poland, after which the devising of oracular language to get around censorship must seem like a needless and rather queer mental exertion. We Central Europeans are sleeping beauties who are finally being roused from our slumber. We move our limbs—what do you know, they can be moved. We begin to talk—so we can do that, too. Censorship is made strong by our fears; in a society that begins not to be afraid, it loses its strength.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How to liberate itself from censorship and self-censorship is an adventure for Central Europe. In this region the need for autonomy appears to have enflamed the entire organism. Depressions here seem gloomier, the yearnings for freedom more romantic, the swings from despair to hope more abrupt. We have what to fear and what to wish for. We wish for a society where autonomy is the secret poetry in every human heart. We don't wish to respect any abridgment of freedom, even if compliance means exemption from another kind of restriction. What's more, we don't want to exchange a censored culture for a culture of dispensability.

Today the desire to redefine man is felt more profoundly in Central Europe. It's as if in a conspiracy of emotions even our dreams and nightmares joined forces, as if we were pregnant with our own doubles, whom we were trying to pick out from the vast unknown. We are looking for a new self-image because our existing identities, we suddenly realize, are confusing and distorted; we are only too familiar with each other's helplessness. But luckily, the lessons learned from succeeding generations keep settling on one another, understanding is breaking down moral bounds. I sense expectancy in the air, subtle conspiracies, knowing exchanges of signals. People who have given thought to suicide find themselves holding each other's hand a little longer.

The democratic movement is aimed not against a particular segment of society but against censorship itself. It doesn't happen too often that an entire society decides: come what may, it will not lie any more. Who would have predicted in the spring of 1980 that in Poland, within the space of a single month, millions would shake off their apathy and refuse to accept as natural an absurd state of affairs: rule by bunglers that's safeguarded by the police; party supremacy that cannot be challenged; "people's power" that has been brazenly handed over to a political bureaucracy that abuses this power as a matter of course, since it is not subject to any sort of control. When the selection process is undemocratic, the leaders are invariably duller than their subordinates. We have long grown accustomed to chiefs who are less bright than their hard-working assistants. Only politically are these chiefs more reliable, which means simply that they are ready to enforce any and all directives that come from above. In order for this to seem natural, tough censorship rules are needed that regulate not only literary discourse but the flow of informal conversation as well.

The Central European democratic movement is a novel phenomenon; what it demands is not power but a counterweight to power—it wants effective self-rule for real communities, and this makes it different from Communist as well as liberal and even social democratic rule. Its aim is not to achieve power through political parties and other power bases but to develop ways of defending society from excessive state power. It doesn't wish to overthrow Communist party rule; it simply wants to place it under societal control. It has no intention of challenging state ownership of the means of production, but because it is interested in workers' rights, not just efficient management, it would like to open the state's decision-making powers to the scrutiny of the producing communities.

At long last society is beginning to learn how to defend itself from oppressive state power and, what's more, is learning to control itself as well. Meaningful communications are being taken more seriously; proper emphasis is placed on the contest between free expression and censorship. As citizens become more aware, more sophisticated, they will find it intolerable that because of a clumsy organizational structure and slow-witted management, they have to work harder than their colleagues on the other side of the Iron Curtain to achieve the same results. It isn't enough if players in the political arena are replaced; the spectators too want to have their say. Self-rule is the greatest societal need in Central Europe today.

What is happening already is that society is gaining in strength; the number of independent-minded people, the channels of uncensored communication keep growing. Let them tap our telephones; we'll say what's on our minds anyway. Let them ban our thoughts; we'll pass them on to others somehow. The only way to guard against censorship is to ignore it. Let the government remain in place and have,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for all we care, the legitimacy of a monarchy; let it rule by the will of a party that, though it offers a great many advantages to its members, can't even entice one-tenth of the adult population to join its ranks; but then, at least, let society have the freedom to lead its own life. It's not the faces of new officeholders but the revitalized faces of non-officeholders that spell the beginnings of autonomy. We learn to appreciate the advantages of geopolitical emergencies: instead of valuing superior external strength, we set store by what's below and inside us.

In these parts you don't have to be successful to have friends. On faces peering out of state-inspired roles, you will find a whole community of half-concealed, informal, affectionate allies, a convergence of unofficial sympathies. People in the West are freer than we are; our consolation is that we are less lonely. The counterculture holds on to official rejects. Thoughts excluded from the official organs of communication find their way into the medium of informal conversation, are transferred, that is, from the public to the private sphere. It's this lively oral tradition that lends our culture its unique character. Autonomy here is not something that emanates from the top—it exists deep inside the society. The prestige that goes with independent behavior cannot be undermined; it's not subject to changes in the political or economic climate.

In Central Europe we have less respect for fashionable novelties than for values that endure, for recognition that's constant. And it's not official recognition that determines human worth (and not financial success either, since the cult of measurable wealth in our moderately rational societies still seems suspicious and queer rather than respectable); judgments are based on an invisible system of evaluations, on decisions reached by the family council of a parallel culture, which doesn't even have to convene to make its sentiments known. The state can't exclude anyone from this community. Everyone knows that recommendations and condemnations issued by the official propaganda are always greeted with suspicion. The names that have a popular ring are not the ones made famous by official trendsetters but those of steadfast people who put up with the vicissitudes of changing times, who endure neglect, poverty, harassment, and through it all manage to keep their sanity.

Open solidarity is tantamount to a revolution against censorship. A hunger for communication is spreading across Central Europe. We are slowly coming out of a torpor brought on by alcohol, oversedation, overeating. The Polish awakening gave proof to an existing reality; under the hard shell of statist rule a new kind of society has reached maturity. We found out, for example, that as important as meat was for the workers, freedom was even more important. What's valued right now is not private gain but intelligent teamwork, the creative use of power, the free exchange of ideas between consenting adults. Honest relationships mean much more than statistical proof of unprecedented growth. The independent-minded citizen is surely a piece of work of a higher order than the most advanced available technology. This should be especially obvious since we have learned that without political democracy there can be no economic democracy, only a faltering, wasteful, debt-ridden would-be economy.

The utopia of a society that adheres to the social contract has made its appearance in Central Europe, as has a voluntary, grass-roots solidarity that places self-rule above all other virtues. It's an authentic, unsquelchable Central European movement, brought about, if unwittingly, by "state socialism" itself. We seek in the solidarity of autonomous existences the resolve not just to reach a political goal but to join an ongoing, never-ending struggle. Our societies agreed to eliminate closed state cultures quietly, step by step, and replace them with invitingly open cultures of their own. I believe that more and more independent-minded citizens will shed their statist uniforms; I believe that censorship in Central Europe is past the peak of its power. At the same time, I do not claim that milder forms of censorship are any less dreary. Alas, dear reader, they are very dreary indeed.

Translated from the Hungarian by IVAN SANDERS □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yehuda Litani

Tragedy on the West Bank

With this article—written by an Israeli journalist who for some years has been the West Bank correspondent of the leading Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz*—we begin a series of articles about Israeli society and politics, all of which will be written by Israeli contributors. Forthcoming features will include studies of the Israeli economy, the relationship between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews in Israel and the shifting political configuration, and more.*

This series has been made possible by a grant from Mr. Harry Kahn *and we wish here to express our gratitude to him.* — Eds.

Sixteen years have passed since Israel occupied the West Bank in June 1967. If the occupation continues for another three years—and there are no visible reasons to expect its cessation—it will reach the same number of years as those of Jordanian rule (1948–67). This writer believes—and so do quite a few like him in Israel—that the end of Jordanian rule and the beginning of Israeli rule in the West Bank stopped a process of Jordanization.

In the context of history, it is difficult to use the words "what if." Who knows what different processes might have taken place? Still, it can be assumed that if Jordanian rule had continued in the West Bank until now, the assimilation of Palestinians with original Jordanians would have increased, and the Palestinian problem would not have arisen as sharply as it has in our region since the end of the 1960s.

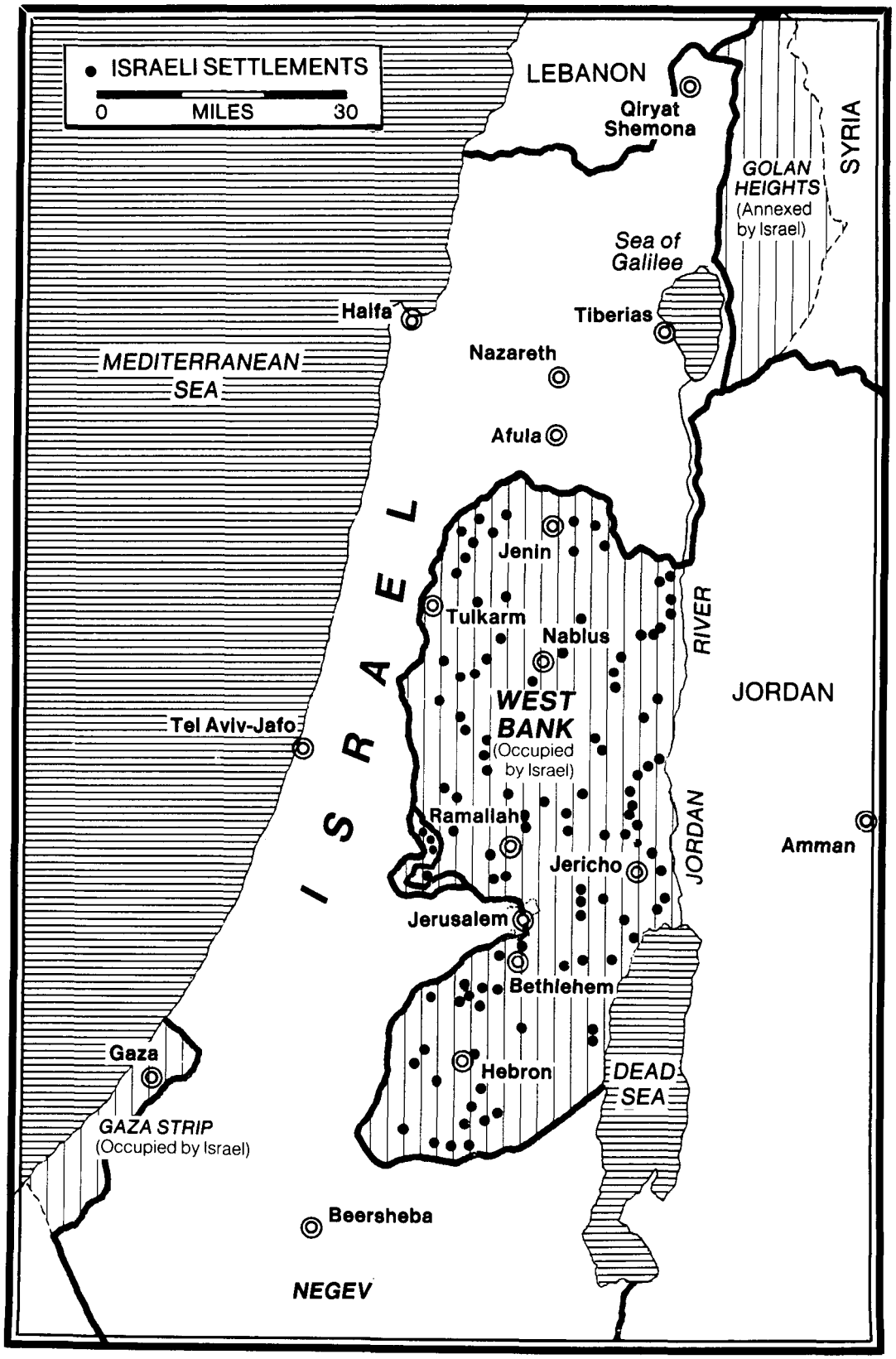
Despite the Jordanian government's discrimination against West Bank residents in the late '40s and most of the '50s, an easing of policy began to emerge in the late '50s. In the early '60s, an increased integration of the two Banks, East and West, began. The Ramallah journalist Raymonda Tawil relates in her book, *My Home, My Prison*, that despite the Jordanian regime's brutal repression of its opponents, especially of the Communists,

> . . . those who showed no interest in politics lived a good life, received respected positions, made money, and were free to travel. . . . Many accepted the situation because of the fear of political involvement. Many intellectuals were afraid and so surrendered. They [actually] began to fear freedom.

Let us continue the game of "what if." We can then assume that had Jordanian rule in the West Bank continued, the usually covert activity of political activists—mainly that of Ba'ath supporters and the Communists—gradually would have increased. But a kind of modus vivendi would have been achieved between the two main currents in Jordan on both the East and the West Bank: on the one hand, a desire for political and social change, a better future for Palestinians and, on the other, an increasing acceptance by those same Palestinians of the idea that this change could be achieved *within* the Jordanian state, and not by harming or destroying it.

Returning to the reality as it happened, these two currents within the West Bank continued into the period of the Israeli occupation. They still exist today. However, while in 1967 the nationalist-Palestinian current was limited to intellectual circles on the fringes of Palestinian society in the West Bank, it now comprises most sectors of West Bank society. By contrast, the current now called "pro-Jordanian" has greatly diminished. This current reigned supreme in the late 1960s and early '70s, until the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Yom Kippur War of 1973 and the Rabat Conference of 1974. Since then the group called "pro-PLO" has grown and greatly increased.

In the last 16 years, the West Bank leaders tied to Jordan have grown old. But they still serve as an important support for King Hussein, to whom they have remained linked since the 1950s. Such personalities as Anwar Nuseibeh (minister of defense in the Jordanian government), Anwar Al-Khatib (former Jordanian governor of the Jerusalem District), Hikmat Al-Masri (former speaker of the Jordanian Parliament), his cousin, Hajj Ma'azuz Al-Masri (former mayor of Nablus), and Elias Freij (mayor of Bethlehem), all are loyal supporters of King Hussein in the West Bank.

There are strong ties between the two Banks in the social, economic, and religious spheres. The bridges across the Jordan River (Allenby and Damia) have remained open. A significant part of the West Bank's agricultural and industrial export goes to Jordan over these bridges. The late Moshe Dayan, defense minister during and after the June 1967 Six-Day War, is responsible for maintaining this important lifeline. In his book, *Moshe Dayan: The Story of My Life*, he writes:

> The most revolutionary innovation in our relations with the Arabs was the "Open Bridges" policy, facilitating free movement of people and goods between Israel and the Arab countries across the Jordan bridges. . . . The open bridges were primarily intended to prevent the severing of the residents of the [occupied] Territories from their people: to enable their children to study in the universities of Egypt and Syria; their elected officials to be members of the Parliament and Senate in Amman; to enable their delegates to meet, openly or secretly, with the leaders of the Arab states (and even with the leaders of the terrorist organizations); children and their parents to visit their families [across the borders]. . . . In addition, the open bridges provide an opportunity for contact between Israel and the Arabs. . . .

Here Dayan does not mention a matter to which he refers extensively in other pages: the passage of agricultural and industrial goods from the West Bank to Jordan. By contrast, apart from a supply of cheap labor, the West Bank sends virtually nothing to Israel—almost no industrial goods or agricultural products. (The only exception concerns those Israeli factories that in recent years have established branches in the towns and villages of the West Bank.)

To this day agricultural goods, such as citrus fruits from the Gaza Strip and vegetables from the West Bank, pass across the Jordan bridges to Amman and often go from there to such faraway places as Teheran, Abu Dhabi, and Kuwait. Since many Palestinian refugees now live in the Persian Gulf states, business ties have formed between these regions and the Arabs of the West Bank.

Although the Hashemite kingdom's political influence on the West Bank has diminished in recent years, there are still many important ties between the residents of the two Banks. The domain of religion is ruled absolutely from Amman, and the largest part of the budget for construction and maintenance of mosques and religious services is brought weekly across the bridges to East Jerusalem, Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, and Jenin. The residents of the West Bank (and those of East Jerusalem—despite its annexation to Israel about a month after the June 1967 War) carry Jordanian passports, which they must renew every few years. This creates an important dependence on the Jordanian bureaucracy.

Every month the Jordanian government still pays the salaries it used to pay to its old government employees and to most of the teachers. Thus most of the Arab employees of the West Bank government now receive a double salary. And all this the Jordanians pay in addition to pensions and various grants that go to thousands of West Bank residents who once served the Jordanian government. Every month Jordan dispatches these funds to its loyalists, funds now called in Arabic *amwal sumud* ("steadfastness funds"). When the issue is money, a West Bank resident knows what's good for him; he will not easily give up payment in the very stable currency of Jordanian dinars while he is under occupation by Israel, whose economy is plagued by one of the world's highest inflation rates.

Most West Bank residents have relatives and friends in Jordan, and there is much mutual

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

visiting. During those visits to Jordan, the Jordanian government tries to strengthen ties with the West Bank people and to obtain information on events and conditions in the occupied areas. Prominent pro-Jordanian West Bank personalities often visit Amman and meet with King Hussein, with his brother, Crown Prince Hassan, and with their ministers. In those discussions, Jordanian government leaders reinforce their supporters vis-à-vis both the PLO supporters in the Territories and the Israeli occupation. Again and again they promise, "We shall return!"

An important Jordanian organ in the West Bank is *Al-Quds*, a daily newspaper published in East Jerusalem, mostly funded by the Jordanian government and run by one of its prominent supporters—Mahmud Abu-Zalaf, a veteran journalist born in Jaffa. *Al-Quds* was the first Arabic daily published under Israeli rule and is the most widely read daily in the Territories, although its line is no longer accepted by most of the Arab population. Its popularity can be attributed to its relatively high journalistic level as well as to force of habit.

For most residents of the West Bank and of East Jerusalem, the connection with Jordan is a geographic, economic, and social necessity, since Jordan is their gateway to the Arab countries, their market for agricultural and industrial products, and the place where friends and relatives live. Yet only a small segment—by a rough estimate less than one-quarter of the population—believes that the return of Jordanian rule represents the political solution for the 800,000 residents of the West Bank.

When Israelis speak of "the West Bank," the term does not include East Jerusalem, which was annexed by Israel in July 1967. But the residents of the West Bank consider East Jerusalem its capital. Now, if the 130,000 people in East Jerusalem are added to the West Bank inhabitants (800,000), the total comes close to a million Palestinians. Add the half-million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, which until 1967 was under Egyptian rule, and the half-million Arabs in Israel itself—and there are, all told, almost 2 million Palestinian Arabs living in "Greater Israel," while there are 3.5 million Jews.

It is in East Jerusalem—now surrounded on almost all sides by old and new Jewish neighborhoods—that the economic, cultural, and political life of the West Bank is concentrated. East Jerusalem was the center of Jordanian rule in the West Bank, although it then had fewer than 50,000 (47,000) inhabitants.

Because it is located in the heart of the West Bank and has enormous religious importance for both Muslim and Christian Arabs, East Jerusalem is the natural center of attention for the West Bank Arabs. Paradoxically, there are fewer obstacles placed on residents of East Jerusalem who want to publish newspapers and magazines because, since the Israeli annexation, East Jerusalem has been subject to the relatively liberal Israeli law—liberal at least by comparison with the regulations enforced on the West Bank (a mixture of Jordanian law and the administrative orders of the Israeli occupation, nowadays called "the Civil Administration"). And so, in recent years there has been a cultural flowering within the population of East Jerusalem that is unprecedented in this century.

Despite the fact that in Israel Jerusalem is officially considered a "united city" and all its neighborhoods receive their services from one central municipality, there is an invisible curtain between the Jewish and Arab residents. The city lives its life with the two communities brushing against each other during the day; but the Arabs see themselves as an integral part of the West Bank—separate from the Jewish inhabitants.

The most important political force in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem is the PLO. Despite repeated Israeli attempts to weaken its political base, the PLO has remained the dominant force in the West Bank. Even the latest war in Lebanon can be attributed to an Israeli attempt to destroy the basis of identification of West Bank residents with the PLO, an attempt that, so far, has not particularly succeeded.

Since the Likud came to power in 1977, there have been repeated attempts by the Israeli government to weaken the pro-Jordan elements in the West Bank as well, but the main thrust of the attack by both Labor and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Likud governments has been directed against the PLO.

In the period from 1964 to 1969, PLO terrorist bands tried to infiltrate the Jordan Valley from the eastern shore. Others, mainly local West Bank residents, operated in the areas of Hebron, Nablus, Ramallah, and Jenin. Most of these terrorists, however, were captured, and so they did not succeed in carrying out their attacks on centers of Israeli population across the Green Line (the original 1948 borders of the state of Israel). Until the Yom Kippur War, and mainly until the Rabat Conference in 1974, the political scales for most West Bank residents tipped in favor of Jordan. But since King Hussein agreed to give up his claims, most residents of the Territories, including the pro-Jordan elements, view the PLO as the only organization that represents the Palestinians. And this despite the fact that part of the population disagrees with PLO policy on one or another issue.

The first municipal elections in the West Bank under Israeli rule were held in 1972. In these elections, mostly pro-Jordan candidates were elected, such as Sheikh Muhammad Ali Ja'abri in Hebron, Hajj Ma'azuz Al-Masri in Nablus, and Elias Freij in Bethlehem. But four years later, in the municipal elections of 1976, a turn in public opinion had clearly taken place. For then the PLO candidates won in the major West Bank cities—Nablus (the biblical Shechem) and Hebron. In Nablus the mayoralty was assumed by Bassam Shaka, a member of an important family in the city, who even before the elections had gained approval and legitimacy among the Jordan supporters. In Hebron the victor was PLO candidate Fahd Kawasmeh, a member of the city's largest clan. In smaller towns too the PLO-supported lists won.

All this gave the West Bank a new, legally elected leadership of PLO supporters. Since the 1976 elections, the representatives of the West Bank population were—in the view of the Israeli rulers as well—pro-PLO leaders. Sharp criticism was directed at then Defense Minister Shimon Peres (today the leader of the Labor Alignment), for having "put the PLO people in power in the West Bank."

Indeed, to this day no further municipal elections have been held in the West Bank, for fear of the renewed election of PLO supporters. And this despite the fact that according to Jordanian law, which is officially in force in the West Bank, elections should have been held in 1980.

Since the Likud has come to power in Israel in 1977, two distinct periods can be discerned in which the government pursued different policies in its relations to these pro-PLO mayors. Until the Camp David agreements and a few months thereafter, the Begin government maintained a tolerant attitude toward them. And this despite the fact that immediately following Camp David those mayors organized public gatherings in all the larger West Bank towns (with close cooperation of the Communist party, the strongest party in the West Bank because of its long tradition of underground activity under Jordanian rule)—gatherings aimed to demonstrate against the new agreements. In accordance with the PLO line, it was said at these gatherings that it was the intent of the agreements, and especially of the proposed autonomy agreement, to annex the West Bank to Israel without satisfying the national aspirations of the Palestinian people.

In 1978, the Israeli authorities decided that such public meetings went too far and were too dangerous, and so restrictions were imposed on the pro-PLO leaders in the West Bank. Such public gatherings now were prohibited; censorship of newspapers and other publications was enforced. A period of repression began for those Palestinian leaders who had united in the National Guidance Committee. That committee included the mayors of the larger West Bank cities, representatives of labor and welfare organizations, editors of pro-PLO newspapers (*Al-Fajr* and *A-Sha'ab*, both published in East Jerusalem), women's and students' organizations, and others.

At the beginning of the '80s, two pro-PLO mayors and members of the National Guidance Committee were deported to Lebanon. They were Fahd Kawasmeh, the mayor of Hebron, and Muhammad Milhem, the mayor of Halhul, along with the Kadi (the supreme Muslim judge) of Hebron. These three were charged in 1980 by then Defense Minister Ezer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Weizman with incitement to riot, and so having caused the murder of seven Israeli settlers in Hebron. Although Fahd Kawasmeh was considered one of the moderates in the National Guidance Committee, as opposed to such extreme members as Karim Khalaf, mayor of Ramallah, and Bassam Shaka, mayor of Nablus (both considered supporters of the PLO's "Rejection Front"), Weizman ordered Kawasmeh's immediate deportation. This action was taken because of the influence and clout of the Hebron settlers who were headed by Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the founder of "Jewish Hebron."

At the same time also began the harassment of the mayor of Nablus, Bassam Shaka. The Israeli Military Government and the Defense Ministry wanted to deport Shaka, but after being imprisoned, he was granted an appeal. The attempt to deport him focused attention—not for the first time—on this man, who became for both Israelis and Palestinians the symbol of the Palestinian struggle against Israel in the Territories. Until the late '50s Bassam Shaka had belonged to the Ba'ath party (whose center is in Syria) and had been deported for this activity from Jordan in 1957. In the early '60s the Jordanians permitted him to return to the West Bank (then, of course, under their rule)—and Shaka then resumed his family business (raising agricultural crops on the huge Shaka estates in the Nablus area and in the Jordan Valley). Since his election to mayor of Nablus in 1976, he has led the struggle, throughout the West Bank, against Israeli settlement.

From 1980 on, restrictions have been imposed on the movements of West Bank mayors identified with the PLO and on other public figures (among them the leaders of the West Bank's Communist party, which is organizationally tied to the Jordanian CP—both adhere strictly to the Moscow line). Now these mayors and public figures could no longer leave the areas of the cities where they lived without the military government's official permission. Similar restrictions were imposed on mayors identified as pro-Jordanian.

In early June 1980, explosives were placed in the cars of three prominent pro-PLO West Bank mayors. Two of the mayors, Bassam Shaka and Karim Khalaf, were seriously wounded. Both of Shaka's legs had to be amputated. Khalaf was luckier; he lost only one of his legs from the knee down. The third mayor, Ibraham Tawil of Al-Bireh (close to Ramallah) was saved when an Israeli border-guard sapper checked his car (after reports had been received of the explosions of the mayors' cars in Ramallah and Nablus) and the explosive charge went off in his face. That sapper lost his eyesight.

The actions against the mayors occurred exactly 40 days after the murder of the seven Israeli settlers in Hebron. They provoked waves of anger and frustration among the residents of the West Bank; in Israel too they set off protests. Suspicions were directed at extremist groups in Israel and among the settlers in the Territories. Prime Minister Begin promised a thorough investigation. And indeed, an investigation team of the Israeli security services (the Shin Bet) was established. Immedi-

Abba Eban on the West Bank

If we were to hear that some people in Holland were eager to incorporate 4 million Germans into their country against their will, we would conclude not that the proposers of that idea were patriots, but that they were demented. Yet the idea that Israel can permanently impose its authority over a foreign population that constitutes 30 percent of its own size is solemnly put forward as if it were a rational alternative.

There does not exist on the face of the earth a single democratic country that would resemble what Israel would look like if it were permanently to control a foreign nation with a sharply defined personality, recognized as such by the entire world and, paradoxically, by the prime minister in his signature of the Camp David agreement.

Partition was not a diplomatic accident when it carried Israel to statehood, national identity, international recognition, and Jewish self-reliance. It was the expression of an authentic and immutable duality in the human landscape of the territory between the river and the sea. There are two nations, not one, in that area, so that any unitary political structure is bound to be coercive, artificial, and morally fragile.

—*Jerusalem Post*, May 13, 1983 □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ately after the explosions some Israeli security officials claimed that, very likely, extremist Arab groups had settled accounts. There were rumors in Israel that the car bombings were meant to cut down the enormous influence the West Bank mayors had gained among their people, and thereby to restore the influence of the PLO leaders abroad. So far, however, no basis has been found for these stories.

Some people in Israel claimed that our security services had nearly conclusive information on the persons who had planted the car bombs and that the perpetrators were Israeli citizens, some of them settlers. But, it was said, the security services wanted to avoid the kind of investigation procedures they used with the residents of the Territories—that is, methods more brutal than were customary in Israel proper. Anyway, three whole years have passed since these terrorist attacks. Not only have the perpetrators not been brought to justice; they are still at large and could possibly be preparing similar actions for the future.

Since then there has been a steep decline in the public activity of pro-PLO figures in the Territories. The National Guidance Committee has been outlawed and its activists put either under house arrest or city-limits restrictions. Despite all this, its members have maintained their political ties; their activities, which until then had been open, have become more secretive. The wounded mayor of Ramallah, Karim Khalaf, was deported to Jericho upon his return from extended medical treatment; later he was removed from his post. Bassam Shaka was dismissed as mayor of Nablus and in effect put under house arrest. The mayor of El-Bireh, Ibrahim Tawil, also was removed from office, along with a number of small-town mayors identified with the PLO. Israeli officials were appointed in their place.

Although, on the surface, the activities of the leaders identified with the PLO have ceased, they were revived by another source. Jordan and mainly its King Hussein despaired of any chance of arriving at an understanding with Israel after the Likud's rise to power in 1977. Jordan did not join the Camp David accords, despite the Americans' concerted efforts. The king remembered his bad experiences with the Labor Alignment leaders, with whom, at least, he had found a common language on certain issues; and now, in light of the Likud government's policy in the Territories, King Hussein saw no chance at all of an understanding.

But then, at the time of the Camp David meetings, at the close of the '70s and the beginning of the '80s—first gradually and then more rapidly—Jordan and the PLO grew closer. Both Jordan and the PLO, and especially its main organization, Fatah, found that by now they had more common than conflicting interests. They established, in Amman, the Joint Jordan–PLO Committee. That joint committee was greatly strengthened by the 1978 Baghdad decision to use it to funnel funds to supporters in the West Bank. Jordan, however, did not permit the PLO to bring armed fighters into its territory—its relations with the PLO had not become that cordial—but senior PLO commanders, mainly of Fatah, began arriving in Amman for weekly meetings.

Because of old animosities, not all the difficulties between these two claimants to Palestinian representation were smoothed over; but a joint system for the distribution of funds began to develop, as well as a common ideological basis. And in the West Bank, such pro-Jordan leaders as Elias Freij began to form ties with the PLO leadership (and this despite his reservations about connections with the more extremist factions in the PLO).

In the wake of the recent split in the PLO and the rebellion of certain Fatah commanders in Lebanon, the inhabitants of the West Bank and of Gaza stood united, to the last man and woman, behind Yasir Arafat. Moderates and radicals, supporters of Jordan and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood, all declared that Arafat carried the flag of the Palestinian revolution, that a split in the Palestinian ranks at this difficult time was unacceptable.

The fact that nearly one and a half million Palestinians in the Territories—who stand, in the PLO's phrase, "in the front line facing the enemy"—took Arafat's side, strengthened his position. It may have been this popular support that encouraged him to fight the rebels and not to surrender to them. In an unprecedented ruling, the Mufti of Jerusalem gave his permission for the assassination of Hafez al Assad, the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

president of Syria, explaining that it is a religious obligation to kill this "enemy of the Palestinians." It is surely worth noting that not a word was heard in the Territories on behalf of the Syrians and the PLO rebels. A process of unification is now under way and if it continues, it may bring in its wake interesting political developments, and perhaps a new position toward Israel on the part of the inhabitants of the Territories.

While ties between PLO and Jordan supporters in the West Bank were growing stronger, the Israeli authorities increased their pressure on the leaders of both camps. Since 1976, a new concept had developed in Israeli security circles: "personalities" from the West Bank village sector were to be encouraged to assume leadership positions at the expense of the old urban leaders. The calculation was simple: 70 percent of the West Bank population lives in villages, and only 30 percent in cities. Why, asked the government officials, should the minority lead the majority?

Thus began the period marked by the government's policy of encouraging the rise of what were later called "the Village Leagues." The initiative in this matter was taken by Mustafa Dudeen, a resident of the village of Dura (south of Hebron). His name did not arouse any particular excitement in the West Bank, since his past had not been marked by any great achievements for the Palestinian people. Dudeen, today more than 70 years old, began his career during the period of Egyptian occupation of the Hebron area in 1948. He was loyal to the Egyptians, and when they had to leave the area, he left with them. Dudeen stayed in Egypt for many years, and among other things served as special adviser to President Nasser. In the 1960s he returned to Jordan and served there in a number of government posts, most prominently as a cabinet minister during the Black September in 1970. He was nearly the only minister of Palestinian origin who agreed to be part of the Jordanian cabinet in this period of suppression of the Palestinians. Many on the West Bank do not forgive him to this day.

Later Mustafa Dudeen served as Jordanian ambassador to Kuwait, got involved there in a scandal, and was compelled to resign. In the mid-'70s he returned to the West Bank, after an absence of more than 25 years. By now he was actually unemployed. In 1976 he met with the new adviser on Arab affairs to the Israeli military administration, Professor Menahem Milson of the Hebrew University. The two apparently hit upon a new policy idea for the West Bank. Milson wanted to establish a more moderate Arab leadership, willing to cooperate with Israel in most areas.

The Military Government (after changing its name to "the Civil Administration") now began forming the Village Leagues, first in Hebron, Dudin's area, and later in Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jenin, and even in Nablus. Appointed to head these leagues were usually people with a shady past, men like Bishara Kumsiyeh in the Bethlehem area—a former cab driver from Beit Shahur (a town near Bethlehem), who in the days of Jordanian rule had acquired a police record for drug-smuggling.

Large budgets have been funneled to these leagues (this year, for example, slightly less than half the total budget of the Civil Administration is designated for the Village Leagues). Their members now began supervising substantial areas of the life of their communities, both in the villages and in the towns (mainly in the Hebron area). The Village Leagues collected money for travel to Jordan, for registration in the agricultural associations, for receipt of seeds and various licenses. Then the Military Government, and later the "Civil Administration," supplied members of the leagues with arms, and they began moving through the streets with these weapons. The heads of the leagues are protected by the authorities, and Mustafa Dudeen has at his disposal, 24 hours a day, the support of a "border-guard" command car, with armed bodyguards at his side. He has a communications radio in his home that is in round-the-clock contact with the Hebron Civil Administration.

The Israeli authorities sought to depict the leagues as something like "peace leagues." But this is hardly what they are. Not only have the leagues failed to become popular, they are a focus for resentment and hostility. Most of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

population considers them the West Bank's semi-Quislings.

Lately there have been signs of a sobering in the Civil Administration regarding the Village Leagues. The weapons have been taken away from most of their members, and the importance the authorities once attributed to them has diminished. The main reason is the discovery of criminal elements in the leagues, people that now are standing trial. Some of the leagues' members abused the authority granted them: not only did they collect monies above and beyond what was allowed; they have molested peaceful citizens at night, and constantly harassed political opponents. In Bala'in, a village in the Ramallah District that is the home of the head of the regional Village League, Yusuf Al-Khatib, a life-and-death struggle began after Al-Khatib's appointment between his clan and a rival clan. In the struggle, he was murdered, whereupon his family began to wage a retaliatory campaign against the rival clan. For a month the village of Bala'in looked and sounded at night like a battlefield: shots were fired from light and heavier weapons, grenades were thrown—it was an outright war, until the Civil Administration stepped in. By then the whole area had become a free-fire zone for the Village League people, who were searching—with considerable assistance from some Israeli security personnel—for the murderers of Al-Khatib.

Although the pro-Jordan and pro-PLO groups have become substantially closer in recent years—in no small measure owing to a common hatred of the Village Leagues—their relations have usually reflected those between the higher-echelon leadership of Jordan and the PLO. If "common enemies" appear, such as the Village League leaders, they will briefly unite against them. If there is harassment by the authorities, as in recent years, they try to form a united front; but basic differences are not forgotten for even a minute. There are nuances and interim solutions among the various groups on the fringes of these camps. There is, for example, a large group on the fringes of the pro-Jordan camp that advocates a combination of the two programs: an independent Palestinian state on the West Bank in confederation with Jordan, with a leadership that would include supporters of both Jordan and the PLO. Yet those among the PLO supporters who are close to the Rejection Front people oppose any cooperation with the Jordanians.

These Rejectionists advocate a "Greater Palestine"—a secular Palestinian state under majority rule (an Arab majority, of course, after the return of all the refugees). This solution means wiping Israel off the map. But to an outside observer it seems that despite the great resentment the Palestinian inhabitants of the Territories harbor toward Israel, they know that such a solution, even if envisioned in the distant future, does not seem realistic. Most of them would be content with an independent Palestinian state in the Territories, with East Jerusalem its capital and with one tie or another, strong or weak, with Jordan.

Beyond internal disagreements, the inhabitants of the West Bank and of East Jerusalem are almost united in their massive, yet usually passive, opposition to the Israeli settlements that began to sprout immediately after the Six-Day War. As with other issues (arrests, cultural restrictions, book banning, strict censorship of newspapers, and strict supervision of subjects and material studied at the universities), they usually let others fight their battle—the Arab states, or liberal elements in Israel.

The first settlements in the West Bank were started during the term of a Labor Alignment government, headed by the late Levi Eshkol. These settlements were built in three centers: the area surrounding Arab Jerusalem, the Etzion Bloc, and the Jordan Valley. The terms for these settlements are called by many Israelis "the minimum consensus." But regarding these areas too, there is really no general consensus in Israel. A number of different groups, mainly "doves"—the left, most of "Peace Now," and others—don't agree to settlement in any part of these regions.

Immediately upon Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem in July 1967, preparations were begun for large land expropriations in the area surrounding the eastern part of the city. More than 10,000 dunams (a dunam is a quarter of an acre) were expropriated in the first years, and another few thousand later on. Eventually

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jerusalem was surrounded by new Jewish neighborhoods: Ramat Eshkol, the French Hill, Ramot, Giloh, Neve Ya'acov, East Talpiot, and others.

But this process of "Judaization of Jerusalem" created an opposite process, not particularly desirable to the Israeli authorities—an "Arabization of Jerusalem." East Jerusalem, which under Jordanian rule had 47,000 Arab inhabitants, now has more than 130,000. Its population has almost tripled in one of the most interesting processes of the past 16 years on the West Bank. In addition to the natural increase, the high birth rate of the Arab population, there has been a sharp increase in migration from Arab areas near Jerusalem, mainly from the Hebron region.

Most of the laborers who put up the new buildings in the Jewish neighborhoods surrounding Jerusalem came from the areas south of the city—from Bethlehem and Mount Hebron. Builders, plasterers, stone-layers, molders, stone-cutters and whitewashers, all arrived in the course of an accelerated migration to Arab Jerusalem. Until the Six-Day War, most construction workers in Jerusalem had been Jews. But soon after the war, Jewish laborers left construction work owing to the large influx of Arab laborers (most of them unskilled), who asked for much lower wages than most Jewish laborers and did not receive, at least in the first years, the social benefits customary in Israel. At first the Arab laborers came alone and lived in rented rooms in the crowded Muslim quarter of Jerusalem's Old City; later they brought their families. They began building houses (most of them illegally constructed) in the open spaces, the gaps between the new Jewish neighborhoods, mainly in the areas stretching eastward toward the region overlooking the Jordan Valley.

Huge new Arab neighborhoods now also were going up in areas of the West Bank not annexed to Israel—between Ramallah, north of Jerusalem, and the Atarot industrial zone. A typical neighborhood of this kind is Dahiat Al-Barid, which now is very crowded, while before the Six Day War it was sparsely settled. Thus a new situation has been created in which each people believes that the other is encircling it or, in other words, that "we are being choked" by a ring of "their" neighborhoods. A similar situation was later created in Hebron as well.

The first Jewish settlement activity began in late 1967 in Gush Etzion, south of Jerusalem, with government approval. Before the War of Independence in 1948 this area had five Jewish settlements, most of them Orthodox. Then, in the war, Gush Etzion was captured by the Arab Legion, assisted by armed villagers from the area. The residents of Kibbutz Kfar Etzion, then the largest Jewish settlement in the place, were mercilessly slaughtered by the legionnaires and especially by the villagers. Men and women from the other settlements (children and the elderly had been evacuated earlier) were taken prisoner by the Jordanians and returned to Israel only after the war.

Because of the strong feelings many Israelis have for these old abandoned Jewish settlements of the Gush Etzion the Israeli government (at the time a National Unity government) adopted a decision to return the children of the murdered members of Kibbutz Kfar Etzion to their home.

And thus, in effect, that government acted against the principles of its own general policy. There were people in Israel who then said that if it was possible to have the children of Kfar Etzion return to their land, why should the Arab refugees from Jaffa and Haifa not return to their homes too? Why change the arrangement that had existed for 19 years under Jordanian rule, when Palestine had actually been divided into two parts? And why not use the areas captured in the war for negotiation with Jordan? But these voices found almost no response among the broad public. For, at that time, Yigal Allon, a minister of the government and prominent member of the Labor party, began to formulate the plan that was to be named after him. According to the Allon Plan, Gush Etzion was part of the government's new settlement program. Along with Gush Etzion and the areas surrounding Jerusalem, Allon's settlement program was comprised of the Jordan Valley and parts of the Judean Desert adjacent to Hebron. So these areas began to be systematically bitten off from the West Bank, chunk by chunk, and were allotted for Jewish settlements by the various Alignment governments. And then, in 1977, the Likud came to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power. All these are historical facts that are important to remember.

At first, when additional settlements were established in Gush Etzion under the Allon Plan, that process went forward rather easily, since the lands being settled had been owned by Jews before 1948. The problems between Arabs and Jews in Gush Etzion began to flare up only in recent years, when Jewish settlers aimed to expand their territory as part of a general campaign to proliferate settlements in the West Bank.

The most acute problem was sparked at the initiative of the young Rabbi Moshe Levinger, originally from Jerusalem, who arrived at Hebron's Park Hotel just before Passover 1968 with a few dozen followers, most of them Orthodox Jews, ostensibly to celebrate the Passover holiday in this Arab hotel. They had planned their arrival there in secret. Not only did they want to return to the city's old Jewish quarter, whose residents had been massacred in the 1929 riots by extremist Arabs of Hebron; they planned to establish a Jewish Hebron—a city with a Jewish majority that would in effect "swallow up" its Arab inhabitants.

Rabbi Levinger and his settlers could not have chosen a more propitious moment. The defense minister at the time, Moshe Dayan, was hospitalized for an operation, and the coordinator of activities in the Territories, Major-General Shlomo Gazit, was observing a period of mourning after the death of his father. There was indeed no authorized person in the government who could have decided to evict them after the celebration of Passover was over, for which they allegedly had come to Hebron.

Thus the settlers were able to confront the government with an established fact. And indeed, in this undertaking they were receiving assistance from within the cabinet. They were helped by Menahem Begin, then minister without portfolio; by Shlomo Hillel, minister of police (Labor party); by the ministers representing the National Religious party—and by Yigal Allon, who viewed their settlement as part of his plan. The settlers also were sure of a sympathetic reaction among part of the public by means of the "Greater Israel" movement, which advocated the annexation of the West Bank to Israel, and whose leaders included such well-known intellectuals and writers as Shmuel Yosef Agnon, Uri Zvi Greenberg, and Moshe Shamir. And soon a covert competition began between the Herut-Liberal bloc (later Likud) and the National Religious party over which of them was giving more help to these settlers—while Shlomo Hillel, minister of police, was supplying them with their first weapons, directly from the police depots.

The Hebron settlers later established a Jewish neighborhood overlooking Arab Hebron, which they named Kiryat Arba, and then penetrated into the old Jewish quarter in the heart of Hebron near the Cave of Machpelah, the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

The two settlements at Kfar Etzion and Hebron typify the two forms of Israeli settlement that have developed since then: official settlements, established with government encouragement and with public means, receiving the customary assistance given to new settlements—and illegal settlements, assisted at first by private and covert public means (at the independent initiative of one official or another), which only after a while will receive the retroactive approval of the government, usually because there is no longer a choice, and after the application of strong public pressure both at the site and within Israel. Such illegal settlements have been established under *both* Alignment and Likud rule.

By the time of the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the Israeli government had developed the settlements in Gush Etzion, in the Jordan Valley (where most of these lands had been government-owned and so were easily transferable to settlers), and also—and seemingly without alternative—Kiryat Arba, which then was viewed by most of the public as a "stepchild," despite the support it had received from the fringes of the cabinet and the Herut-Liberal bloc (by 1973 again part of the opposition).

The Yom Kippur War provided the impetus for the establishment of the Gush Emunim movement ("Group of Believers"), which is responsible for Israeli settlement in many areas of the West Bank from then on. The war caused these young people—all of them fer-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vently Orthodox Jews and members of the Yeshivah of Rabbi Zvi Yehuda Cook, Mercaz Harav, in Jerusalem—to become convinced of an urgent need to embark on their settlement campaign throughout the West Bank. They see the West Bank as an integral part of the Land of Israel, land that God has commanded the Jews to settle. And they consider this "commandment" one of the most important in Judaism. (It should be noted, however, that other adherents of Orthodox Judaism do not share this view, and opposite opinions are held by such eminent leaders as Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik of Boston).

At first, Gush Emunim was a small minority, but slowly and surely it has imposed its opinion on a large part of the Israeli public. Its members knew that the first stage of their campaign would be difficult, and that their small, but determined, forces would often have to defy the government. But in the second stage of the campaign—and Gush Emunim had planned this correctly—it would sweep along Israel's "silent majority." And here the Gush Emunim counted on the many people who are longing to leave the cramped housing-development apartments in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, and aspire to a bit of land and a house of their own, without consideration for Arab neighbors or for the fact that the land, in most cases, has to be taken away from those neighbors.

This is how "improvised" settlements began—even in the days of the Labor Alignment government. The first to be founded outside the limits set by the Allon Plan was Ofra, north of Ramallah. (It received the passive assistance of the minister of defense at the time and now the leader of the Labor opposition, Shimon Peres.) The Alignment government approved a few settlements in sparsely populated areas of Samaria, according to the rule "not [to settle] in heavily populated areas." And so Ariel was established in Central Samaria, and Elkanah just across the Green Line.

Thus a major line was breached, in the days of the Alignment government: there was to be no more talk about the Allon Plan; but rather, settlements were to be founded in sparsely populated areas, *outside* the limits set by the plan. What now remained of Yigal Allon's vaunted plan? And what remained now for King Hussein to negotiate about with Israel? (As it was, even the Allon Plan had been vigorously opposed by the king, despite many attempts by Alignment leaders, who had met with him a number of times in the early '70s, to convince him of its merits.)

The final violation of all taboos and prohibitions, however, was the establishment of the Elon Moreh settlement, near Nablus. Nablus indeed was an object of settler aspirations—envisioned as the final point, completing a continuous line of settlements that were to be established—along a longitudinal line—within the West Bank, running from Hebron to Nablus, through the heart of the Arab population centers.

A few months before the 1977 elections, the settlers, members of the Gush Emunim, launched their eighth attempt to establish an illegal settlement near Nablus to be named Elon Moreh. Seven times they had been removed by the Alignment government, then headed by Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, from the places where they tried to found their settlement: the village of Rujeib, on a mountain southeast of Nablus, and the old Turkish train station in Sebastia, west of Nablus.

By the time they made their eighth and last attempt, the Gush Emunim people had succeeded in arousing massive public pressure, and now they staunchly refused to evacuate the area. They warned of "bloodshed," and some of them chained themselves to the site. They also aroused massive public opposition, and the Supreme Court ruled against the right to settle on privately owned land in the Territories. Still, Rabin and Peres feared the first sparks of a budding civil war and yielded. They permitted 30 families from the Elon Moreh settlement group to enter an army camp near the Arab village of Kaddum. The settlers then established a settlement named Kedumin adjacent to the army camp, and thus the final stage of the Gush Emunim's struggle concluded with a resounding victory.

After the Likud came to power, Menahem Begin, Ariel Sharon, and other government leaders prepared to aid Gush Emunim in fulfillment of election-campaign promises. Soon after the Likud victory, beneath the canopy of a Jewish prayer shawl, at the consecration of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the new synagogue in the Kedumin Settlement, Menahem Begin promised that "scores of Elon Morehs will be established." That promise was fulfilled by Ariel Sharon.

Tens of thousands of dunams were taken from Arab inhabitants both by direct expropriations and legalistic ruses. Land was declared state-owned by the occupying authorities, and the Arab owners had to prove in local courts and before Military Government committees that the land is private. The inhabitants had difficulty in meeting this requirement since most of the land in Samaria had not been entered in the land registry. The Israeli government chose to consider as state-owned any plot of land that could be used for Jewish purposes—as if the overwhelming majority of the local population were not Arab at all.

All the areas of the West Bank—Gush Etzion, southern Mount Hebron, the Hebron

The Madness of Hebron

The following is excerpted from an article by Irving Howe, "The West Bank Trap," which appeared in the New Republic, *July 4, 1983.*

. . . I went to Hebron, a West Bank town with some 70,000 Arabs. I went with Rafik Halabi, a Druse journalist who works for Israeli television. Halabi, like other oppositionists, has received death threats; the day I left Israel, the tires of his car were slashed and his mailbox broken open; but these signs of hooliganism, a growing problem in Israel, have not kept him from telling the truth, week after week, about the character of the Israeli penetration into the West Bank.

Hebron is about an hour from Jerusalem, and along the way we saw Arab villages upon which the occupying authority had clamoed a curfew. This is "punishment" for the throwing of stones by Arab youths at passing Israeli vehicles. It's an eerie feeling: you ride through a village where every door is shut, every window blind drawn, and some houses are marked with ominous Xs. What does this remind you of?

Arabs will keep throwing stones and Israelis "punishing" them as long as the occupation continues. First mild and then brutal, occupations must, by their very nature, be oppressive. That is what it means to occupy someone else's place.

Walking through Hebron, I felt that I was encountering some profound malformation in Jewish life. In the center of the town several score of Jewish settlers have planted themselves in an old, cramped Jewish quarter (Jews were driven out in the late 1920s after a bloody Arab pogrom). Zealots who make nationalism into a pseudoreligion and religion into ultranationalism, these settlers believe the Bible grants them unconditional sovereignty over this land. They are guarded by Israeli soldiers perched on rooftops and stationed in front of the Cave of the Patriarchs, sacred to both Jews and Moslems.

Let us be clear. Jews have a historic right to live in Hebron, where Father Abraham is said, authoritatively, to be buried. Jews have a moral right to live wherever they please. But intelligence suggests that rights be exercised with decency and common sense, which means at times to restrain their exercise. If these settlers had come to Hebron saying they wished to live peacefully with the Arabs under whichever national authority prevailed, then no one could legitimately object to their presence. But they have not come to coexist. They have come to dominate, they have come to rule.

Seeing these ardent young settlers and their demure young women as they slid past the silent Arabs, I kept wondering: what is it about the Jewish experience or the Jewish psyche that prompts so bizarre a re-creation of the ghetto? For centuries Jews struggled to escape claustrophobic ghettos, and now, in Hebron, another is being set up—an enclave of fanatics in the very midst of the infidels. To be sure, with Israel's military might behind them, they don't expect to remain besieged for very long. But right now they have locked themselves into a ghetto, surrounded by hatred and guarded by Israeli draftees, some of whom surely look upon this project with distaste. Is this what Zionism meant when it proposed to make Jewish life "normal"?

I find myself wondering whether these settlements in Nablus and Hebron have some relation to the frenzied irrationality that led hundreds of thousands of Jews in the 17th century to the heresies and then disasters of Sabbatianism. Just as the false messiah proposed to spear transcendence through the pleasures of antinomianism, so the messianic hunger is being corrupted on the West Bank into an impulse to conquest. . . . □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

area, the Bethlehem area, Ramallah, Nablus, Jenin—now were strewn with new settlements. With undaunted energy, Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon performed this mission. The combination of the Gush Emunim's idealism and devotion with Sharon's energy and single-mindedness wrought a real change on the West Bank map. Today there are more than a hundred Israeli settlements in the West Bank with some 30,000 Israelis. The stage of the founding of "idealistic" settlements like Elon Moreh has long passed. Now the plan is to sweep along the Israeli middle class in a rush to buy land on the West Bank at absurdly low prices in order to build villas on the expropriated land under the apolitical slogan, "Improve the Quality of Life!" The mission of the various settlement bodies now is to reach a count of 200,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank by 1987.

Since the mid-'70s, relations between Israeli settlers and their Arab neighbors have been deteriorating. The difficulties started with and still center on Hebron. Ever since the settlers appeared in Hebron's Park Hotel and then stayed in the area allotted them in the courtyard of the Military Government building, relations between the settlers and the city-dwellers have been explosive. This was in sharp contrast to the relations that had begun to develop between members of the Military Government and the Defense Ministry (then headed by Moshe Dayan), and the mayor at the time, Sheikh Muhammad Ali Ja'abri. Those were cordial and even close relations.

The Arab community of Hebron has always been known as more extreme in its Muslim belief than that of any other place in the West Bank. It is extreme and fanatic, and there are many hotheads among the city's Muslims who will latch on enthusiastically to any alleged religious dispute, because it gives them a chance to demonstrate how fervently they uphold their religion and its principles. Among the Jewish settlers in Kiryat Arba and Hebron proper, there also were some religious fanatics and extremists along with Jews who had immigrated to Israel from the Soviet Union and the United States. From the start, the influx of the Israeli settlers made Hebron an ideal place for conflict. And there was conflict, not only between the two peoples, but between their religions as well— since the Kiryat Arba settlers, led by Rabbi Levinger, created a synagogue in the Cave of the Patriarchs, which until then had been strictly a mosque.

The Cave of the Patriarchs, the traditional place of burial of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is, of course, a holy place for both Muslims and Jews. Now the Jewish religion does not prohibit prayer in a Muslim mosque (while prayer in a Christian church is forbidden). But for the Muslims, the drinking of wine, especially in a holy place, is absolutely forbidden. The settlers, however, now proceeded to celebrate weddings and circumcisions in the Cave, and performed the regular Sabbath and holiday blessings, all of which required the drinking of wine. For the Jews, bringing a corpse into a house of prayer is considered profanation of a holy place, but for the Muslims of Hebron, the greatest honor accorded to the dead is to carry the body on the way to the graveyard through the Cave of the Patriarchs, where the people pay their last respects. This, in turn, now offended the Jews.

In addition to religious disagreements and conflicting rituals, instances of violence began to occur between Jews and Arabs in the Cave of the Patriarchs. Jewish holy books were desecrated, and Muslim religious objects were damaged. And there were incidents of physical violence in the neighborhoods near Kiryat Arba. Arabs attacked Jews and Jews attacked Arabs. The settlers began to walk armed in the streets of Hebron, and hundreds of files on cases of physical injury, harassment, and attempted murder began to accumulate at the Hebron police station. Each side felt that the authorities were supporting its rival. But usually the police were more effective and quick when the issue was harm done to Israeli settlers.

A very serious deterioration in Jewish-Arab relations in Hebron occurred in March 1976. The city's Arab population felt that the settlers not only wanted to live in the area of Kiryat Arba, but that they planned to advance house by house, aiming to turn Hebron into a Jewish city, thus totally obscuring its Arab character. The Jews, on the other hand, wanted to "res-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cue" the old Jewish quarter from its state of ruin and return to the Jewish people an area where brutally murdered Jews had once lived.

Land Day, at the end of March, is the Israeli Arabs' traditional day for organized demonstrations and protests against Israeli land expropriation—a day now observed in the Territories as well. In March 1976, on Land Day, Hebron's Arabs demonstrated, blocked roads, burned tires, and threw stones at Israeli security forces. Rabbi Levinger's people in Kiryat Arba decided to "help" the security forces—although they had not been asked to do so. They drove into the center of the Arab city in a few cars, carrying their weapons, and began to "restore order": they ordered residents around (among them the Kadi, the supreme Muslim judge of Hebron) and made them remove rocks placed as roadblocks, and caught youths who they said threw stones at them.

Several Arab youths were brought up to Kiryat Arba for a few hours. There they were cruelly mistreated. The settlers sicked on these youths a huge Great Dane that bit them, forced them to stand in the sun for hours without clothes, and more. Since then, and to this day, these manifestations of vigilantism are continuing between the settlers and the Arab townspeople. Arab youths throw stones at private cars or buses carrying settlers, and in response groups of settlers organize vigilante actions of revenge. One night, in Ramallah and El-Bireh, the windshields of more than 120 Arab-owned cars were smashed; another night, the windshields of more than 40 private cars and trucks were smashed in Halhul, north of Hebron—all in response to stone-throwing.

And soon lives were lost, too. Seven Israeli settlers were murdered near Beit Hadassah, the Israeli squatters' settlement in Hebron; another settler had been killed one night a few months earlier in a market street. The settlers now were permitted to use their weapons in "self-defense." But the limits of self-defense were overstepped more than once, and as a result Arab youths were killed. Since the mid-'70s, in demonstrations and clashes with security forces in the West Bank's larger cities, at least 20 Arab youths have been killed by soldiers and border policemen.

Recently relations between Jews and Arabs in Hebron have reached an unprecedented low. In July a yeshivah student was murdered in the Hebron market. Some weeks later, terrorists—as yet unidentified—burst into the Islamic College and started shooting indiscriminately; three were left dead, and more than 30 were wounded. After the murder of the yeshivah student, the Israeli authorities disbanded the city council and put an Israeli official into the mayor's place. If the West Bank is Israel's cancer—and I believe it is—Hebron now is the place where the malignant disease rages most.

Since the end of the '70s, many Israelis no longer travel freely in the West Bank for fear of stone-throwing or clashes with Arab inhabitants. Settlers driving on West Bank roads often carry firearms, and almost every week there have been reports of stone-throwing, demonstrations, and arrests of Arab youths. The settlements in the West Bank have become fortresses, surrounded by barbed wire. The settlers are convinced that a significant increase in their numbers, along with a "strong-arm" policy toward the Arabs, will reduce the violent clashes.

Such a "strong-arm" policy was implemented in recent years by former Defense Minister Sharon and former Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan. It is difficult to say whether this policy broke the West Bank people's resistance to the settlements, to land expropriation, and to Israeli rule, though it surely has had a deterrent effect and has reduced the number of demonstrations.

The "strong-arm" policy has been used throughout the Territories: in political and economic matters, and in matters of the people's cultural and daily life. Restrictions have been placed mainly on pro-PLO but also on pro-Jordan political leaders. These leaders are restricted to their places of residence and not allowed to meet and organize for political purposes. Economic restrictions have often been imposed, prohibiting the transfer of goods to the other side of the Jordan River, as collective punishment of a city or an area. In the cultural realm, schools and universities have been severely restricted in the subjects they may teach; teachers have been forbidden to work in institutions of higher learning without signing declarations in which they must promise not to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be active in, join, or support the PLO. The sale, circulation, and possession of hundreds and even thousands of books have been banned, and strict censorship has been imposed on the newspapers published in East Jerusalem.

In cases of stone-throwing, collective punishments have often been imposed on cities and towns. There have been prolonged curfews, sometimes for months, and various harassments and humiliations: men were lined up at night in their pajamas; others were rounded up at night and forced to "count the stars in the sky" or to sing the Israeli national anthem; youths suspected of stone-throwing had to work in the Military Government building; heavy monetary fines were imposed on the parents of youths caught throwing stones at Israeli vehicles. And Palestinian artists have been forbidden to exhibit paintings in shows whose subjects appeared to be too nationalistic to Israeli government officials.

At the same time, in recent years, there has been a steep decline in the number of terrorist actions by the various PLO cells, both in the West Bank and in Israel proper, owing to the great efficiency of the Israeli security services on the one hand and, on the other, the concentration of the PLO's struggle against Israel on the northern Israeli-Lebanese border. Moreover, most of the terrorist PLO bands that used to operate in the West Bank and in Israel were caught in the early stages of their activity.

We now witness in the West Bank a struggle between two societies—one Jewish, and the other Arab. At this point, for the Israeli government the struggle focuses on the question of how to seize more land and bring more settlers there. For the Arabs, the aim is to prevent this process. So far, the Israelis have had the upper hand, for they are the rulers and the Palestinian Arabs the ruled.

Far-reaching changes have taken place in both these societies since the June 1967 Six-Day War. Most of Israeli society then believed that the conquered Territories would serve as a bargaining chip—to be exchanged for peace between Israel and the Arab states. But now, slowly and consistently, much of Israeli society has grown accustomed to the "burden" of the Territories; most of the society no longer views them as that burden but as "new territories" that are undergoing a process of Israelization.

A significant minority, however, for example "Peace Now," opposes these processes. But it is still a minority. This minority believes that the continuing occupation of the Territories costs Israel the heavy price of a change in the basic moral values of a Jewish society that wanted—and part of it still wants—to be a light unto the nations. But now this society conscripts a significant number of its young men for guard and police duty in the Territories, to be jailers and security-service investigators. It now is a society that shows insensitivity to the suffering of another people; a society that serenely rests assured that the needs of the neighboring nation are only daily bread and a livelihood. It is a society that ignores the national aspirations of its Arab neighbors; a society that has forgotten that only a few score years ago its people were treated as it now treats the Palestinians.

Arab society also has undergone great changes in the last 16 years. Scores if not hundreds of thousands of its members have moved from work in agriculture to work in industry (this is one of the reasons for the neglect of agricultural lands in the West Bank, which later became Israeli). It is a society where the desire for education and vocational training in almost all areas is reminiscent of that of Jews at the beginning of the century. It is a society that has almost completely rallied around the PLO as the focus of its national aspirations. In the first years of the Israeli occupation, it was still possible to formulate more moderate solutions within some type of Jordanian framework. But every year tens of thousands more of the young people in the West Bank join the circle of PLO supporters. They were born under Israeli occupation and do not know or have forgotten the fact that Jordan has ruled there for 19 years.

In many ways, the West Bank is reminiscent of other places in the world—such as Northern Ireland, or Algeria in the 1950s. So far, the problem has not yet reached the frightening dimensions of Northern Ireland or Algeria. But if the current trends continue unchecked, without an honest attempt to resolve the problems

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

between the two peoples on a national basis, this writer has no doubt that we will shortly reach the situation of Belfast, or even of Algeria.

Now, facing an Israeli coalition determined to annex the West Bank de facto (if not de jure at a later stage), there is an Israeli opposition—a minority—ridden with contradictions regarding its ideas about a solution in the West Bank. And in the meantime the ruling coalition proposes archaic solutions. We, here in Israel, are repeating the classic mistakes of colonial occupiers in Asia and Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, without recognizing that right under our noses a nation has formed that has national aspirations much like our own.

Israel is not prepared for future developments in the West Bank. Even if the Gush Emunim wins, even if the West Bank is annexed to Israel, the problem of the Palestinians will remain. There are those in Israel who trust that, ultimately, it will be possible to "convince" hundreds of thousands of Arabs to emigrate at their own initiative or, more correctly, at our initiative. I can only hope that those who advocate this—considered extremists today—will continue to be an insignificant minority.

But that is what we hoped when the Gush Emunim was first being organized. At that time they were considered extremists, and today they are considered part of the Israeli consensus.

Translated from the Hebrew by JOEL GREENBERG □

"This book will transform the debate about distributive justice beyond all recognition."

—CHARLES TAYLOR, McGill University

"Michael Walzer presents a sophisticated new theory of equality and supports it by surveying an extraordinarily rich array of social and political ideologies and arrangements....Fascinating and important." *—JUDITH JARVIS THOMPSON, M.I.T.*

"A book which bridges philosophy and social policy in the most engaging and fruitful way... the foundation of a new, emergent liberalism." *—DANIEL BELL, Harvard University*

SPHERES OF JUSTICE

A Defense of Pluralism and Equality

MICHAEL WALZER

$19.95 at bookstores, or direct from the publisher
TOLL FREE (800) 638-3030
Major credit cards accepted

BASIC BOOKS, INC.
10 East 53rd Street, New York 10022

Herman Landshoff

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Heilbroner

A Feasible Vision of Socialism

Who does not know Marx's lovely vision of life in a "communist society" where it will be possible "to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner, just as I have in mind, without ever becoming hunter, fisherman, shepherd, or critic"?

This is precisely the image of the future from which Alec Nove seeks to disenthrall us in his discussion of "feasible socialism"—

> a state of affairs which could exist in some major part of the developed world within the lifetime of a child already conceived, without our having to make or accept implausible or far-fetched assumptions about society, human beings, and the economy.*

For the example that Marx has chosen, Nove tells us, is singularly misleading.

> All these tasks [he writes] are solitary, some could be hobbies. Most labor is social labor in the sense that each contributes to joint endeavor which would be disrupted if someone freely chose to go fishing instead. But let us rewrite Marx's sentence as follows: "Men will freely decide to repair aero-engines in the morning, fill teeth in the early afternoon, drive a heavy lorry in the early evening, and then go cook dinners in a restaurant, without ever becoming an aero-engine maintenance artificer, dentist, lorry driver, or cook." Then it does look a trifle nonsensical, does it not?

The example illustrates very well the tone and intent of Alec Nove's critique of existing ideas of socialism and his effort to sketch in the central ideas of a workable alternative. Nove, now emeritus professor at Glasgow University, is a distinguished scholar and critic of the Soviet system, known for his ability to combine merciless criticism with a saving sense of sympathy. (In the excerpt that follows, the reader can catch some flavor of his intellectual and literary style.) Here he has written a book directed mainly at the economic, sometimes technical problems of socialism, a book nonetheless sufficiently rich in anecdote and detail, clear in exposition, and warm in tone to be read with pleasure by someone who has never heard of Pareto optimality.

Just the same, I suspect that many who do read Nove's book will be disappointed in it. This is because it is very difficult to resist the utopian strain in socialist thought. One does not commit oneself to the idea of socialism on the basis of a balancing of pluses and minuses that shows a marginal credit in favor of socialism. Socialism is a matter of ideals and convictions that coexist uneasily with mundane calculations. Yet mundane calculations are what feasible socialism is about. Feasible socialism is the socialism of tomorrow, long before ordinary people will have shed their acquisitive and hierarchical habits, before a supertechnology will have allowed us to make radical changes in our ways of organizing production and distribution.

As Nove describes it, feasible socialism should be better functioning, more equitable and enjoyable than capitalism, but it will be, nonetheless, a socialism in which there are crime, tabloids, soap operas, corruption, nasty bosses, pockets of decay, class differences and antagonisms, and economic problems of a great

---

* The Economics of Feasible Socialism, by Alec Nove. Winchester, Mass.: Allen & Unwin, 1983. 244 pp. Cloth, $29.50; paper, $9.95.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many kinds. Feasible socialism aims to be better than the best of capitalisms—better than Austria or Sweden, for example—but it does not expect to be altogether different from them, nor as markedly different as advanced capitalism is from backward capitalism.

This makes Nove's tasks at once simpler and more difficult than the very long-range visions of Rudolph Bahro, whose *The Alternative* is an effort to picture a socialism in which the most profound social and psychological changes have taken place, or Branko Horvat's *The Political Economy of Socialism*, which depicts in great detail a kind of middle-stage socialism where the apparatus of advanced capitalism has been largely dismantled and replaced by worker-directed enterprises and citizen-directed politics. It is simpler, because Nove is relieved of the necessity to speculate on the possibility, much less to suggest the means, of accomplishing these tasks of reconstruction. But it is more difficult, because he must convince his readers, above all those on the left, that his deliberately modest and unutopian—indeed, openly antiutopian—stance is to be accepted gladly as the first stage of a journey whose possible later destinations lie entirely outside Nove's concern. Indeed, after we have read his critique, those destinations may appear more distant and difficult of attainment than we had originally thought.

Nove begins his discussion of feasible socialism with a measured onslaught against the utopian residue of Marx's thought, exemplified in the quotation with which I began. "I think it can be demonstrated," he writes, "that Marx's economics is either *irrelevant*, or *misleading* [his italics], or both, in respect of the problems that must be faced by any socialist economy which could exist."

I think Nove is right, in the time span with which he is concerned. Marx's economics is almost exclusively concerned with the diagnosis of capitalism, a diagnosis that Nove accepts in large part. But Marx's diagnosis introduces difficulties for the attainment of feasible socialism because of its animus against the detailed division of labor, the impersonal authority exercised by market relations over human activity, the dehumanizing aspects of money, the role of competition as a destructive rather than disciplinary force.

Yet, in feasible socialism there will remain a need for a division of labor, a reliance on market forces, a cash nexus, and a competitive mechanism. And whereas advocates of a more transformative image of socialism, such as Sweezy or Bettelheim, would agree reluctantly that many of these attributes of the capitalist would be acceptable *for a while*, Nove accepts them without constraints of time as the only—and, therefore, the necessary—forms of social organization that will allow us to avoid the sclerosis and repression of centrally planned monolithic economies.

As I have said, Nove is a great expert on the problems of such economies, above all an expert at ferreting out the internal "logic" that can be discerned within the web of their bureaucratic rules and the abysmal performance of their systems. His introductory chapter on the Marxian "legacy" of utopianism is therefore followed by a dissection of Soviet-style economies. The chapter contains nothing that is new but a great deal that is fresh. Nove tells us, for instance, that the Soviet economy produces 12 million identifiably different products, disaggregating down to specific sizes of ball bearings, designs of cloth, and sizes of shoes. In such a society it is not difficult to issue orders such as "Produce 200,000 pairs of shoes." What is difficult is to say: "Produce 200,000 pairs of *good* shoes that fit customers' feet." The missing element in the great creaking mechanism of the Soviet system is, of course, the market with its feedbacks, its "signals," its constant pressures on suppliers to supply acceptable products.

Nove makes us see something that standard textbooks often miss, namely, that markets are to be esteemed not so much for their capacity to organize production (after all, the Soviet Union also produces large amounts of goods), but *to correct mistakes*. This is why Nove insists that the market, with all its ancillary subordination of life to anonymous pressures, must be accepted as an integral part of feasible socialism.

From the Soviet Union we travel east and south to Yugoslavia, Hungary, China—with a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

few side glances at Poland and Chile. Nove examines these countries to discover what variants are possible on the centralized model. He dwells at some length on the perplexities of workers' management (example: should a truck driver in a successful worker-owned enterprise earn more than a truck driver in an unsuccessful one?); and he recognizes the limitations and tensions of the Hungarian model with its error-prone reliance on planning and its cautious acquiescence in limited private enterprise. Nonetheless, Nove does not criticize to reject but to winnow out, and he rescues from these experimental systems, with all their onerous problems and uncertain prospects, the imperfect realities of some kind of workers' management and some mixture of central planning and private enterprises as elements that can be used in feasible socialism.

This leads naturally to the problem of transition from actually existing economies of various sorts toward the general direction of a feasible socialism. Nove has very little to say about the social requirements for such a transition, much less the strategies required to mobilize the necessary political force. He is interested mainly in the economic bridges that can be used to go from where we are to where we wish to be. The discussion is therefore at a more concrete level of policy than usually attends this crucial issue. The question is not whether such a transition will be "historically" possible but through what specific measures it can be realized, to whatever extent history allows.

For instance, in discussing the transition from the marketless monoliths of centralized planning, he writes:

> It appears to me that the creation of small autonomous units, especially cooperatives, would be the most urgent and the most acceptable first step. Most of these would be in the area of consumers' goods and services and would cover the notorious gaps in the sort of "minor" items Brezhnev recently listed as in short supply: toothbrushes, needles, thread, babies' diapers. Some cafés, a small rural bakery where there may be none, a hairdresser, a holiday home agency, a car repair shop. And if a good cook and his wife wish to open a small restaurant in Tomsk, might not the citizens benefit? Should the cook be treated as a criminal exploiter if he goes so far as to employ a youth to wash the dishes?

But Nove is essentially interested in the transition from democratic capitalism. Perhaps I should rather say Nove's tacit assumption is that the stage is set by the democratic victory of a Mitterrand or a Gonzalez. Then the question is what policies to pursue, what policies to avoid.

Nove's choices are sure to dismay the advocates of rapid and radical change. Income redistribution must surely be on the agenda, but the possibilities of substantial social improvement by siphoning downward are disconcertingly limited and rapidly affect the upper reaches of the working class. A wealth tax is admirable in intent but may lead to unintended consequences in which the very rich escape taxation by capital flight, leaving the upper middle class to feel the full brunt of the policy —an all too prescient prediction in view of Mitterrand's problems. Price controls can lead to shortages. Wage controls require the cooperation of unions, always an uncertain ally under feasible socialism. Protectionism safeguards jobs but may invite retaliation, with unemployment as a consequence. Nationalization is essential in certain areas but leads easily to inefficient state monopolies.

The choice of economic policies is, therefore, not between black and white but among a spectrum of grays, any shade of which is sure to have its opponents.

Adroitly or otherwise, the choices will be made, and we finally reach feasible socialism. It is obviously an eclectic system. There is a core of nationalized industry and a conscious direction of major investment through parliamentary means. Cooperative forms of economic organization are encouraged. Small entrepreneurship is welcomed and private individuals are free to conduct their own proprietary businesses. Competition and market incentives guide and deter the activities of the private sector; large-scale objectives and a solicitous recognition of "externalities" guide the public sector. Income dispersions persist, with efforts to reduce them to the Japanese rather

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than the American scale—perhaps 4:1, comparing managerial to janitorial pay scales. The active engagement of workers in the determination and direction of their enterprises is actively sought, especially in those small-scale plants where it becomes socially manageable.

Will it be feasible in economic terms? I can see no reason why not, speaking with respect to its objectives of assuring a high, steady level of output and employment, and an acceptable mix of equity and efficiency. Feasible socialism will continue to be buffeted by international currents and by internally generated pressures, but no more so than existing capitalism, and Nove hopes that federations of feasible socialisms can overcome the weaknesses that might be insuperable if the system were to be tried in one country alone.

Will it be feasible in political terms? That is another question. For feasible socialism would not only have to surmount the resistance from displaced elites, but it would also have to maintain the morale and the support of its own citizens, the largely unchanged electorate of today that we will still have around us within the time span of Nove's project. This is the great wager—that the patience and understanding of ordinary people, and of the leaders of ordinary people, will resist the powerful idealized visions of the future.

Nove's sane, calm, practical, and, therefore, "disappointing" book tells us that the boundary between capitalism and socialism is not a line but a region, in which the old landscape changes only slowly into a new one. To traverse this region depends on the triumph of good sense, modest hopes, clear memories, and some small measure of social gratitude over illogic, millennial hopes, social amnesia, and collective impatience. It is the wager on whose outcome the prospects for democratic socialism depend. □

. . . and a Word from Alec Nove

The following item appears as Appendix Two in Alec Nove's book The Economics of Feasible Socialism, *published this year by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., London, and Allen & Unwin, Inc., Winchester, Mass. Copyright © 1983 by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd. It is here reprinted with the kind permission of the publishers.*

Let us now imagine the reaction of a reviewer, writing in an imaginary journal that we will call the *Revolutionary Worker*. (I have never heard of one with that title, and hastily apologize to its editor if by any chance it exists.) Let us further imagine that the reviewer is a serious, committed, intelligent dogmatist, and that he would not be satisfied with mere denunciation: he will not speculate on how much the author was paid by the CIA, or assert that the ideas expressed are indistinguishable from those of the Chicago school. In other words, he proposes to launch a serious attack. Along what lines?

One could be called *definitional*. What is being described here is a possible transitional society, but socialism it is not. I could anticipate that this would be [Charles] Bettelheim's position, for instance. He was present when I read a paper in Paris putting forward some of the ideas expressed here, and his comment was: "Yes, indeed, the problems described would certainly arise on the morrow of the seizure of power." I replied that they would, in my view, be still there after the morrow too.

Did they arise in the U.S.S.R., would they arise elsewhere, because of relative backwardness? Or because the class struggle was not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

waged with sufficient vigor? Surely the answer in both cases must be "no." Economic development, industrial growth lead to a big increase in complexity, in the number of interconnections, in the range of products, in specialization, in division of labor.

One must anticipate a major criticism: *socialism and the market are incompatible.* This view was that of Marx himself, and of Kautsky, Lenin, and Bukharin. It is the opinion of Sweezy, Bettelheim, and Mandel. The three last-named are willing to admit that market relations and money cannot just be "abolished"; that for a time they are needed, but this would be a time of transition.

The disagreement here would center on the possibility of overcoming the obstacles to the elimination of market relations without creating in the process a large, powerful, economically inefficient and socially dangerous bureaucratic hierarchy. That Soviet-type planning is associated with such a hierarchy, and that it is both inefficient and undesirable, would be accepted, indeed stressed by Sweezy, Bettelheim, and Mandel.[1] So my disagreement with their position rests on the view, defended at length in the preceding pages, that no way exists to avoid the dominant role of the "bureaucracy" unless one reduces the *functions* that give it power. To do so without granting autonomy to productive units, and therefore without "commodity production" and markets, is impossible. Equally impossible is to envisage participation, self-management in any meaningful form, unless this is linked with autonomy of the production units in which people work.

No, my imaginary critic will assert, this shows lack of understanding of industrial democracy. The "associated producers" will decide. They are the consumers too, so of course they will decide with the needs of fellow-citizens in mind. Soviet experience (he may say) is irrelevant, because of the existence of an "exploiting" elite, lack of true democracy, and so on. I can only continue to deplore the use of loose slogan-phraseology as a substitute for serious analysis. The real dogmatists would reject this reference to "serious analysis" as unimaginative empiricism: "revolutionary praxis" will show the way. What way? They do not know, and seem to have no particular interest in finding out.

The intelligent dogmatist would then direct his fire on weaknesses and inadequacies that certainly do exist in the market mechanism. He would refer to dangers of unemployment, of cyclical fluctuations, of excessive inequalities of income. He would note the growth of large corporations in capitalist countries, within which market relations are replaced by administrative subordination. He might note the advances and great potentialities of computerization, the micro chip. Markets mean competition, and its negative features are there for all to see. Many effective critical points can be made along this line, without, unfortunately, grappling with the real question, which is: what alternative is there, what is being proposed? In any case, what is here advocated is not an untrammeled free market; a major role exists for planning. That strains and contradictions would arise on the boundary line between plan and market, between central and local decisions, is indeed predictable, and quite unavoidable—as unavoidable as the fact that the interest and desires of one individual or group might conflict with those of others. If one were to define socialism in such a way that these conflicts and contradictions would not, *could* not, exist, then we are (in my opinion) back to utopia. Such a world appears to me inconceivable even beyond the time scale set here. Inconceivable and undesirable. What boredom, if we never argued!

Yes, the producer is also the consumer. But not (as a rule) of his or her own products. Radoslav Selucky pointed out the dilemma. In the centralized marketless economy, "since every working man is simultaneously both a producer and a consumer, his economic essence is split in two parts; as a producer he reacts through his material interest in the targets of the plan, while as a consumer he tries to satisfy his material needs and interests through his

[1] See Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim's discussion in numerous issues of *Monthly Review* and their other works, and the last chapters of E. Mandel, *Marxist Economic Theory* (London: Ink Links, 1968). Of course, they do not agree in their evaluation of other aspects of Soviet experience.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

effective demand." Because of the many complexities and contradictions inherent in the marketless system, "if as a producer he meets effective demand expressed by him as a consumer, he would behave against his interest as a producer."[2] How, in practical terms, can one overcome this contradiction, in the absence of a market?

The dogmatist-critic must also clarify his attitude to autonomous small-scale activities. He may say that they will be uneconomic, and point to the elimination of small corner shops by supermarkets in the U.S.A., plus other instances of the concentration of capital. I would reply: Yes, it *may* be so, but it is not a matter of legislation, or of extra-economic coercion. Supermarkets did indeed displace the American corner shop, through competition. Socialist supermarkets might do the same. But one should not send the police to arrest the corner shopkeeper for trading, if he is filling gaps in state and socialized trade (and finds this profitable *because* these gaps exist). Of course, it is possible to *assume* that under socialism there will *be* no gaps; *ex ante* planning with perfect information and perfect motivation will take care of all needs. This is no more (and no less) farfetched than some other assumptions made in orthodox economics. It still remains farfetched and question-begging. There is indeed no need to consider how to identify and correct error, if error can be removed from the scene by assumption.

The notion of *scarcity* also might be attacked, and the possibility of meaningful abundance defended. That the present world wastes resources, not least on piling up armaments, is undeniable. But can anyone seriously assume the elimination of opportunity-cost, the unrestricted availability of all that people can reasonably want at zero price? Wants do expand, and not only because of advertising. Indeed, the socialists' very proper aim to improve the quality of life sets up additional demands for resources.

The critic may resurrect the notion of a New Man or New Woman, socialized, devoted to the common good. The trouble is that there is a link between this concept and that of abundance. In making choices between mutually exclusive alternatives, an unambiguous common good is operationally undefinable. Nor is there any approach along this line to the question of how to calculate, how to measure cost, how to relate it to result; and no attempt ever seems to be made to consider who is to perform these very necessary tasks, or how a decision once made is to be implemented. Again and again one must stress that three conditions must be met before anything can be done: *information* (what it is best to do, and how best to do it), *motivation* (why bother to do it) and *means*. None of us, however well-meaning and however much we love our fellow citizens, can have more than a fraction of the vast range of information about economic and technological alternative courses of action. With the best of motives, we cannot act unless the means to do so can be acquired. These could have alternative uses, and in a nonmarket system they would have to be administratively allocated by some body (somebody) aware of what these might be.

The nonmarket system advocated by the left-wing critic is *more* hierarchical, more bureaucratic, more dangerous in the power it gives to the state and its high officials, than almost any conceivable alternative. Yet a likely critical line of attack would be to denounce me for imagining a socialism with a continuing distinction between rulers and ruled, that is, a vertical division of labor. There should be, there would have to be, a socialist organization theory, concerned with the process of decision-making at various levels. The existence of levels, and so of the need for *some* hierarchy, are simple facts of life. Thus while a cargo ship will have within it a division of labor, which includes a captain and a chief engineer, it is evident that neither of these skilled individuals, or the crew, can possibly know where their ship should go. A shipping group, with someone in charge of it, would have the information about cargoes and the movements of other ships. Equally surely some responsible individual (who will not "rotate" annually) will be in charge of the electricity grid, and someone will

[2] R. Selucky, *Marxism, Socialism and Freedom* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p. 39.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have to plan the construction and replacement of power stations, consider alternative locations and generation techniques, and so on. "The people," or "the associated workers," can no more do this than I can sing Wotan in Wagner's *Ring*. (Actually, this is a poor parallel. For I *could* sing Wotan, though very badly!) The slogan-statement that they can do so is quite literally meaningless, and this has nothing to do with the intelligence or motives of individuals.

What I have tried to set out is a system in which the greatest possible amount of decision-making authority is devolved from the center, in which hierarchies are multiple and so not all-pervasive, in which individuals or groups can opt out of the nationalized sector if they prefer it, ensuring a reasonable degree of choice for people both as consumers *and* as producers. At all levels the relationship between the organizers and the organized is indeed to be as democratic as the real situation allows. Macro plans would be approved by the elected parliament or assembly, and there would be self-management at micro level, though competition is needed to ensure "automatic" responsibility to customers, to avoid the otherwise dangerous pursuit of sectional interest by abuse of monopoly power, and to ensure consumer choice. Policy with regard to income differentials, privileges, and tax rates would be determined by democratic voting procedures, as would pensions and other social-service expenditures. Abuses of power would be publicized by a free press. Political theory would naturally drop the inherently incorrect notion of the "withering away of the state," and devote attention to the necessary "separation of powers," checks and balances, countervailing powers, since eternal vigilance would indeed be necessary to minimize abuses that power over others makes possible.

But in the last analysis the intelligent dogmatist reviewer would simply have to rely on faith, faith in the ultimate realization of Marx's dream of a just, conflictless, worldwide society of equal citizens, who have conquered scarcity and who build the good life together without money, acquisitiveness, or rivalry. To me this smacks of religion, a kind of sophisticated cargo-cult. I am not by nature a religious man, and interpret "praxis" as having a great deal to do with practice. Hence my concern with *feasible* socialism, and the constraint of feasibility predetermines one's definition of socialism and leads to a conscious rejection of romantic utopias. My critic will disagree. So be it.

One must also envisage an attack from a quite different quarter. One might see Lord Harris sharpening his sword at the Institute of Economic Affairs. Socialism is to be rejected, and a reasonable-sounding version is to be more vigorously condemned, since (it will be argued) it would surely degenerate into centralized tyranny, would in the end be "the road to serfdom," as Hayek would certainly say, even though I would be credited with the good intention of avoiding such an outcome. Praise for private enterprise would be accompanied by warnings of dire consequences of an enlargement of the role of the state. Workers' self-management would be seen as ineffective, with references to Yugoslav experience and also to the attitudes and behavior of trade unions, in Great Britain especially, where their negative attitude to technical progress and productivity is notorious. We might be reminded—and *correctly* reminded—of how the dockers succeeded in wrecking the port of London (and they are well on the way to destroying Liverpool too). Private enterprise would be extolled, its absence deplored. The many difficulties and contradictions that could certainly exist, and have been mentioned in this book, would be strongly emphasized, particularly the problems of risk capital, of reward for success and penalizing of failure. There would be little enterprise, innovation would be resisted. Limitations on higher incomes would destroy incentives, discourage initiative, cause talent to emigrate. The mix between plan and market, the limitations on the latter, would not work, would be inconsistent with efficiency. And so on.

My reply would be along the following lines. In an age of giant corporations, the number of individuals who have the opportunity of showing enterprise, of participating in decision-making, is modest and declining. It may well

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be that, in the scheme here put forward, their number will actually increase. Perhaps a genuine private-enterprise competitive economy does have some advantages over this so-called feasible socialism, but what we actually have is very far removed from such an economy, for reasons that lie deep within the nature of the system. The tendency toward mergers, toward huge and potentially irresponsible multinationals, is as strong as ever, antitrust legislation notwithstanding. Inflation and unemployment are not conducive to efficient resource utilization. The combination of monetarism, powerful interest groups (among employers *and* unions) *and* modern technology could soon put a quarter of the labor force on the streets. As for the behavior of the labor force, and of trade unions, this is indeed a vitally important question, but the evidence is not all one way. True, dockers did very seriously damage British ports, to the benefit of Rotterdam and Hamburg, but there were unions also in Rotterdam and Hamburg, proving that not all need be as myopic (and, frankly, stupidly conservative) as the British variety. It is possible that the blind pursuit of sectional interest will wreck a socialist economy, but it could wreck a capitalist economy too. Perhaps demands for higher wages would be less insistent if there were not constantly before the public eye some very rich individuals who did no work, or whose earnings were offensively disproportionate to the work they did do. The danger of some sort of populist tyranny cannot be ruled out, but Hitler rose to power in a capitalist state, and the economic system here proposed is far removed from the one that facilitated the rise of Stalinism. I would then return to the sort of arguments with which this book began.

Is the world of "feasible socialism," even if feasible, in fact desirable? Opinions are bound to differ on this. Are there some alternatives that are more attractive, and are not utopian? (The Marxist vision is not more utopian than "perfect competition.") It may well be so. Critics, forward! You have nothing to lose but the chains that bind you to conventional thinking. □

MODERN 'ASIATIC' DESPOTISM

~masquerading in communist workers' ideology

by Frank A. Barbaria

A comparative study of Soviet and ancient 'Asiatic' despotisms. Critical theoretical errors by Marx are revealed; errors still adhered to by present-day Marxist movements; errors which aid the Kremlin's masquerade.

400 pp., 10 maps, Index of Concepts. LC: 81-69826
Cloth $12.°° ISBN 0-9606992-0-1; Paper $5.°°

Add $1.°° for mailing; U.S. or Worldwide

IDEAS (Inter-Disciplinary Endeavor to Analyse Societies)
8649 - Springfield Avenue, La Mesa, California 92041

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Michael Walzer

The Politics of Michel Foucault

The following discussion of the political views of Michel Foucault, the influential French writer, was first presented as a lecture at Princeton University in February 1982.

My concern here is not primarily with Michel Foucault's political positions, the statements he has made, the articles he has written, his response to "events"—May '68, the prison revolts of the early '70s, the Iranian revolution, and so on. Though he insists that he doesn't have a political position and doesn't want to be situated on the chessboard of available positions (he doesn't play chess, or any other game whose rules the rest of us might know), he does indeed respond to events, and his statements and articles have a fairly consistent character. They are of the sort I was taught to call, in the political world where I grew up and learned to talk, "infantile leftism," that is, less an endorsement than an outrunning of the most radical argument in any political struggle. But Foucault's infantile leftism is not my main concern.

I want to deal instead with his political theory—though he also insists that he doesn't have a political theory. His purpose, he says, is "not to formulate the global systematic theory which holds everything in place, but to analyze the specificity of mechanisms of power . . . to build little by little a strategic knowledge."[1] But strategic knowledge implies to my mind a coherent view of reality and a sense of purpose, and it is on these two things that I will focus: first, on Foucault's account of contemporary power relationships and their history or "genealogy," and second, on his attitude toward these relationships and his purpose in writing about them.

I make a number of assumptions. I take Foucault to be an author in the conventional sense of that term, responsible for the books he writes, the interviews he gives, the lectures published under his name. I believe that he makes arguments (even, in some large sense, *an argument*) and that he has a purpose. This is to make Foucault into a subject, an academic subject, perhaps to impose upon him structures of knowledge that he wants to shatter. He is an antidisciplinarian (his own word), at war with the established intellectual disciplines. That might be a just war; at any rate, it is an exciting one, and I don't mean to quarrel with it so long as Foucault takes on the disciplines one by one, medicine, psychiatry, criminology, political science, and so on. But each of these campaigns must still take place within the overall discipline of language and the rules of plausibility (if not of Truth).

Foucault's books are fictions, he says, but only because the power relations and the disciplinary establishments within which they could be validated don't yet exist.[2] At the same time, he has many readers who seem to inhabit such establishments, for they take his genealogies to be accurate and even indisputable; and he has students and followers who pursue the research lines he has laid out. His books are full of statements that lay claim to plausibility here and now. He writes in declarative sentences, at least sometimes, though he is fonder of conditional and interrogative forms, so that his arguments often have the character of insinuations. They are bolstered in any case by extensive footnotes and a rather erratic but (he assures us) painstaking documentation. So I take him to be saying something we are invited to believe—and then to disbelieve its opposite, that is, "to detach the power of truth from the forms of hegemony . . . within which it operates at the present time."[3] I take him to be making an

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

argument that is right or wrong or partly right and partly wrong.

Toward this argument, I shall adopt a "constructionist" position. Since Foucault never presents it in anything like a systematic fashion, I shall put it together out of his more recent (and more political) books and interviews, ignoring passages that I don't understand, ignoring too his denials and evasions, and refusing to live at the heights of his flamboyance. I will do what I always do with any book I read: try to puzzle out what the author is saying. So great minds are subdued. . . . Reading Borges's Chinese encyclopedia I would sit struggling to design a proper index.

One last assumption, which I had best make explicit since Parisian reputations are not hard currency in the United States today: I assume that my effort is worthwhile, not only because Foucault is influential but also because his account of our everyday politics, though often annoyingly presented and never wholly accurate or sufficiently nuanced, is right enough to be disturbing—and also because it is importantly wrong. I might sum up the argument to come by comparing Foucault to his great antagonist in the world of political theory, Thomas Hobbes. ("We must eschew the model of Leviathan," Foucault says, "in the study of power.")[4] The comparison won't stand up with regard to insight or lucidity, only with regard to the general views of the two writers. Hobbes gives us an importantly wrong account of political sovereignty; rhetorically inflated and drained of moral distinctions, it nevertheless captures something of the reality of the modern state. Foucault gives us an importantly wrong account of local discipline; rhetorically inflated and drained of moral distinctions, it nevertheless captures something of the reality of contemporary society.

II

Foucault's political argument starts with the following two-part proposition, the second part largely unstated because it is so entirely accepted on the French intellectual left: (1) the king is the actual ruler, the visible, effective, necessary agent, the concrete embodiment of political power in the monarchic state; but (2) the people are not the rulers and not the embodiments of power in the democratic state; nor are their representatives. Elections, parties, and assemblies are entirely absent in Foucault's "discourse of power," and the absence is eloquent. It requires only the briefest of explanations. "Power is not built up out of 'wills' (individual or collective), nor is it derivable from interests."[5] There is no general will and no effective coalition of interest groups; sovereignty works only when there is a physical sovereign. In contemporary Western societies, power is dispersed, but not as democrats hoped to disperse it, not to citizens who argue and vote and determine the policies of the central government. Citizenship and government alike have been superseded. And yet the whole point of modern political theory, since the absolutist state provided the ground on which it was constructed, has been to account for these things.

Theorists still try to answer the Hobbist questions, which Foucault puts this way: "What is the sovereign? How is he constituted as sovereign? What bond of obedience ties individuals to the sovereign?"[6] So they reveal the genealogical constraints of their enterprise, first worked out to account for a set of power relations that have now collapsed. This is another reason, perhaps, why Foucault does not want to call himself a political theorist. When the king's head was cut off, the theory of the state died too; it was replaced by sociology, psychology, criminology, and so on.

The king is headless, the political world has no practical center. Foucault nicely finesses the "legitimation crisis" so hotly debated on the other side of the Rhine; the state has not been legitimate for a long time. The exercise of power, and the acceptance or endurance of power, now occurs somewhere else. The argument of Hobbes and his theoretical heirs was that subjects created and legitimized their own subjection by ceding (some of) their rights to the state; hence the state was rightful and a defender of rights. This state still exists, more or less, but it merely "conceals" the "actual procedures of power," "the mechanisms of disciplinary coercion," which operate beyond the effective reach of the law. Now there is a new subjection, which creates and legitimizes new subjects—not the carriers of rights but of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

norms, the agents and also the products of moral, medical, sexual, psychological (rather than legal) regulation. Our interest shifts, because the action shifts, from the singular state to a pluralist society.

Many years ago, in a graduate seminar with Barrington Moore, I studied a group of American political scientists and sociologists, called "pluralists," who argued that power was radically dispersed in American society. There was no sovereign, no political elite, no ruling class, but a pluralism of groups and even of individuals. Everybody or almost everybody had a little power; nobody had so much as to be sure of getting his own way all the time. I was taught that this was a conservative doctrine. By denying the existence of a directing center, it robbed radical politics of its object. And yet, of course, there was such a center, if not always visible or self-conscious or highly organized: law and policy had a shape, corresponded to a set of interests; and the interests imposed the shape, dominating if they did not absolutely control the making of law and policy.

Foucault can be read, and not inaccurately, as a pluralist; he too denies the existence of a center. "Power comes from below . . . there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations. . . . Power is not something that is acquired, seized, or shared . . . power is exercised from innumerable points. . . ."[7] Again: "At every moment, power is in play in small individual parts."[8] And again: "Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization . . . individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not only its inert or consenting targets; they are always also the elements of its articulation."[9]

This is not, of course, the same argument that the American pluralists made. Foucault is concerned not with the dispersion of power to the extremities of the political system, but with its exercise at the extremities. For the Americans, power was dispersed to individuals and groups and then recentralized, that is, brought to bear again at the focal point of sovereignty. For Foucault there is no focal point, but rather an endless network of power relations. Still, his account does appear to have conservative implications; at least (and this is not the same thing), it has anti-Leninist implications. There can't be a seizure of power if there is nothing at the center to seize. If power is exercised at innumerable points, then it has to be challenged point by point. "The overthrow of these micro-powers does not obey the law of all or nothing."[10] "There is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case."[11] This begins to sound like a reformist politics, and Foucault indeed has been accused of reformism. Challenged from the left, he occasionally stands firm, if uneasy: "It is necessary," he told the editorial collective of a radical magazine,

> to make a distinction between [the] critique of reformism as a political practice and the critique of a political practice on the grounds that it might give rise to a reform. This latter . . . critique is frequent in left-wing groups and its employment is part of the mechanism of micro-terrorism by which they have often operated.[12]

This is certainly right and conceivably, in a certain context, brave, but it avoids conceding the truth for which the collective was reaching: that Foucault is not a good revolutionary. He isn't a good revolutionary because he doesn't believe in the sovereign state or the ruling class, and therefore he doesn't believe in the take-over of the state or the replacement of the class. He doesn't believe in a democratic revolution, for the *demos* doesn't exist in his political world. And he certainly doesn't believe in a vanguard revolution: the vanguard is nothing more than the monarch *manqué*, one more pretender to royal power.

III

Foucault's political theory is a "tool kit" not for revolution but for local resistance. In order to understand what that might mean and whether it is possible, we must consider more carefully the forms of social discipline that replace royal power. Every human society has its own discipline, and in every society above a certain size this discipline is exercised at micro- as well as macro-levels.

On Foucault's understanding, as I understand it, the old regime required only a rather loose discipline at the micro-level; or perhaps, and this is after all a traditional view of tradi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional societies, habitual routines and customary rules worked with little more than intermittent coercion. Political interventions were dramatic but occasional—like those horrifying punishments Foucault describes in the opening section of *Discipline and Punish*, which made royal power visible and were entirely consistent with a generally ineffective system of law enforcement. But we live in a different age, where economy and society alike require (and get) a far more detailed control of individual behavior. This is a control that no single person or political elite or ruling party or class can establish and sustain from a single point: hence Foucault's "innumerable points" and his endless networks in which, he says, we are all enmeshed.

Many writers before Foucault have suggested that we live in a more disciplined society than has ever existed before. This doesn't mean that behavior is more routinized or predictable (it isn't), but that it is more intimately subjected to rules, standards, schedules, and authoritative inspections. Some 15 years ago in an article on the welfare state, I argued that

> the most impressive feature of modern welfare administration is the sheer variety of its coercive and deterrent instruments. Every newly recognized need, every service received, creates a new dependency and a new social bond . . . even [the] recognition of individuals—our hard-won visibility—becomes a source of intensified control. Never have ordinary citizens been so well-known to the public authorities as in the welfare state. We are all counted, numbered, classified, catalogued, polled, interviewed, watched, and filed away. . . .

And so on: lots of people wrote that way. But Foucault has succeeded in extending and dramatizing this view with a series of books that are rather like the king's punishments: rhetorical statements of great power, though often ineffective in what we might think of as scholarly law enforcement—the presentation of evidence, detailed argument, the consideration of alternative views. The books focus on three or four institutional networks of social discipline, asylums, hospitals, prisons, with side glances at armies, schools, and factories, and it is impossible to read them, whatever disagreements one has, without a sense of recognition.

I will come back to this sense of recognition, and so to the actual experience of living within the network of disciplines. But first I need to say a word about the general character of the network. For it does have a general character, even if it isn't governed by a single will. Foucault is not the Kafka of the prison or the asylum; his account is neither surreal nor mysterious. The disciplinary society is a *society*, a social whole, and in his account of the parts of this whole, Foucault is a functionalist. No one designed the whole, and no one controls it; but as if by an invisible hand, all its parts are somehow fitted together. Sometimes Foucault marvels at the fit: "This is an extremely complex system of relations, which leads one finally to wonder how, given that no one person can have conceived it in its entirety, it can be so subtle in its distribution, its mechanisms, reciprocal controls and adjustments."[13] Sometimes he is quite matter of fact: "If the prison institution has survived for so long, with such immobility, if the principle of penal detention has never seriously been questioned, it is no doubt because this carceral system . . . carried out certain very precise functions."[14]

The complex system within which these functions are carried out is presumably modern industrial society, but Foucault sometimes prefers a more precise name. In his account of how sexuality was "constituted" in the 19th century, he writes:

> This bio-power was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism; the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomenon of population to economic processes. But this was not all capitalism required; it also needed . . . etc.[15]

Capitalism gets what it needs, though how the process works Foucault doesn't reveal, and his account of the local uses of power would appear to make the revelation less likely than it might be within a more conventional Marxist theory.

Some kind of functionalist Marxism, nonetheless, provides the distant underpinning of Foucault's account of power. In one of those dancelike interviews in which he both takes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and doesn't take political positions, Foucault is led to say that the class struggle stands to the local power struggles as their "guarantee of intelligibility."[16] What this intelligibility might mean in his thought is a question that I am not going to reach here. But I do want to notice that the guarantee exists, like Bishop Berkeley's God, and that Foucault's stress on the particularist character of power relations is not an argument for disconnection or radical autonomy. He is, after all, in search of strategic, not merely tactical, knowledge. He argues from the bottom up, but this is a mode of analysis that suggests, at least by its direction, that the world is not all bottom. If he cannot find a state to seize, he still hopes to locate somehow, somewhere, in the complex system of modern society or of the capitalist economy, a comprehensible antagonist.

Foucault begins, however, with tactics, with local power relations, with the men and women at the lowest levels of the social hierarchy or, as he would say, caught in the fine meshes of the power networks, with you and me. We can't understand contemporary society or our own lives, he argues, unless we look hard and close at this kind of power and at these people: not state or class or corporate power, not the proletariat or the people or the toiling masses, but hospitals, asylums, prisons, armies, schools, factories; and patients, madmen, criminals, conscripts, children, factory hands. We must study the sites where power is physically administered and physically endured or resisted.

In fact, this is not quite what Foucault does; he is more a theorist than a historian, and the materials out of which he constructs his books consist mostly of the written projects and proposals for these sites, the architectural plans, the handbooks of rules and regulations, rarely of actual accounts of practices and experiences. Still, it is exciting to see how the projects proliferate, how similar designs are repeated for different institutions, how the rules and regulations, though they often have the perfectionist character of an antiutopia, as if in anticipation of *1984* or *Brave New World*, begin nevertheless to suggest the outlines of our everyday lives. This is the area of Foucault's strongest work, and it is strong even though, or perhaps because, it offers us no "guarantee of intelligibility." It does point, though, to a certain sort of coherence.

For it is Foucault's claim, and I think he is partly right, that the discipline of a prison, say, represents a continuation and intensification of what goes on in more ordinary places—and wouldn't be possible if it didn't. So we all live to a time schedule, get up to an alarm, work to a rigid routine, live in the eye of authority, are periodically subject to examination and inspection. No one is entirely free from these new forms of social control. It has to be added, however, that subjection to these new forms is not the *same thing* as being in prison: Foucault tends systematically to underestimate the difference, and this criticism, which I shall want to develop, goes to the heart of his politics.

IV

I have suggested that all micro-forms of discipline are functional to a larger system. Foucault sometimes calls this system capitalism, but he also gives it a number of more dramatic names: the disciplinary society, the carceral city, the panoptic regime and, most frightening (and misleading) of all, the carceral archipelago. But whatever this larger system is, it isn't the political system, the regime or constitution. It isn't determined by a Hobbist sovereign, shaped by a legislator or a founding convention, controlled through a judicial process.

The crucial point of Foucault's political theory is that discipline escapes the world of law and right—and then begins to "colonize" that world, replacing legal principles with principles of physical, psychological, and moral normality. Thus in his book on prisons: "Although the universal juridicism of modern society seems to fix limits on the exercise of power, its universally widespread panopticism enables it to operate, on the underside of the law, a machinery both immense and minute. . . ."[17] And the code by which this machinery operates is a scientific, not a legal code. The function of discipline is to create useful subjects, men and women who conform to a standard, who are certifiably sane or healthy or docile or competent, not free agents who invent their own standards, who, in the language of rights, "give the law to themselves."

The triumph of professional or scientific

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

norms over legal rights and of local discipline over constitutional law is a fairly common theme of contemporary social criticism. It has given rise to a series of campaigns in defense of the rights of the mentally ill, of prisoners, hospital patients, children (in schools and also in families). Foucault himself has been deeply involved in prison reform or—I had better be careful—in a political practice with regard to prisons that might give rise to reforms. And indeed there have been reforms (in this country at least, but I suspect in Europe too): new laws about consent, confidentiality, access to records; judicial interventions in the administration of prisons and schools. Foucault has little to say about this sort of thing and is obviously skeptical about its effectiveness. Despite his emphasis on local struggles, he is largely uninterested in local victories.

But what other victories can he think possible, given his strategic knowledge? Consider—

(1) that discipline-in-detail, the precise control of behavior, is necessary to the (unspecified) large-scale features of contemporary social and economic life;

(2) that this kind of control requires the micro-setting, the finely meshed network, the local power relation, represented in ideal-typical fashion by the cellular structure of the prison, the daily timetable of prison events, the extra-legal penalties inflicted by prison authorities, the face-to-face encounters of guard and prisoner;

(3) that the prison is only one small part of a highly articulated, mutually reinforcing carceral continuum extending across society, in which all of us are implicated, and not only as captives or victims;

(4) and finally, that the complex of disciplinary mechanisms and institutions constitutes and is constituted by the contemporary human sciences—an argument that runs through all of Foucault's work, to which I will return. Physical disciplines and intellectual disciplines are radically entangled; the carceral continuum is validated by the knowledge of human subjects that it makes possible.

Given all this—leave aside for the moment whether it adds up to a fully satisfactory account of our social life—how can Foucault expect anything more than a small reform here or there, an easing of disciplinary rigor, the introduction of more humane, if no less effective, methods? What else is possible? And yet sometimes, not in his books but in the interviews—and especially in a series of interviews of the early 1970s, which still reflect the impact of May '68—Foucault seems to see a grand alternative: the dismantling of the whole thing, the fall of the carceral city, not revolution but abolition. It's for this reason that Foucault's politics are commonly called anarchist, and anarchism certainly has its moments in his thought. Not that he imagines a social system different from our own, beyond discipline and sovereignty alike: "I think that to imagine another system is to extend our participation in the present system."[18]

It is precisely the idea of society as a system, a set of institutions, that must give way to something else—what else, we can't imagine. Perhaps human freedom requires a nonfunctionalist society whose arrangements, whatever they are, serve no larger purpose and have no redeeming social value. The nearest thing to an account of such arrangements comes in an interview first published in November 1971. "It is possible," says Foucault, "that the rough outline of a future society is supplied by the recent experiences with drugs, sex, communes, other forms of consciousness, and other forms of individuality."[19] In that same interview, with some such vision in mind, he repudiates the likely reformist results of his own prison work: "The ultimate goal of [our] interventions was not to extend the visiting rights of prisoners to 30 minutes or to procure flush toilets for the cells, but to question the social and moral distinction between the innocent and the guilty."[20]

As this last passage suggests, when Foucault is an anarchist, he is a moral as well as a political anarchist. For him morality and politics go together. Guilt and innocence are the products of law just as normality and abnormality are the products of discipline. To abolish power systems is to abolish both moral and scientific categories: away with them all! But what will be left? Foucault does not believe, as earlier anarchists did, that the free human subject is a subject of a certain sort,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

naturally good, warmly sociable, kind and loving. Rather, there is for him no such thing as a free human subject, no natural man or woman. Men and women are always social creations, the products of codes and disciplines. And so Foucault's radical abolitionism, if it is serious, is not anarchist so much as nihilist. For on his own arguments, either there will be nothing left at all, nothing visibly human; or new codes and disciplines will be produced, and Foucault gives us no reason to expect that these will be any better than the ones we now live with. Nor, for that matter, does he give us any way of knowing what "better" might mean.

V

Is Foucault then committed to his anarchism/nihilism? He has a way of turning on anyone who imitates it or tries to act it out politically, and I am inclined to think it is intended to have descriptive, not normative, force. In a 1977 interview, he is savagely critical of some of his comrades in "the struggle around the penal system" who have fallen for

> a whole naive, archaic ideology which makes the criminal . . . into an innocent victim and a pure rebel. . . . The result has been a deep split between this campaign with its monotonous, lyrical little chant, heard only among a few small groups, and the masses who have good reason not to accept it as valid political currency.[21]

For Foucault, obviously, the prisoner cannot be an innocent victim, for he has denied the distinction between guilt and innocence. But his argument does seem to suggest that every act of resistance at every micro-setting of the carceral continuum, whatever its motives, is a "pure rebellion" against the continuum as a whole—and one with which he is always ready to sympathize. What "good reasons" do ordinary men and women have for discriminating among these acts?

The same problem of discrimination arises when Foucault confronts young leftists who confuse the carceral archipelago with the Gulag archipelago, a confusion to which Foucault's terminology in this instance and, more generally, the language of all his books, are a perpetual incitement. He himself resists the incitement and is severely critical of those who succumb. "I am indeed worried," he says, "by a certain use that is made of the Gulag-Internment parallel . . . which consists in saying, 'Everyone has their own Gulag, the Gulag is here at our door, in our cities, our hospitals, our prisons, it's here in our heads.'" And he goes on, forcefully, to reject the "universalizing dissolution of the [Gulag] problem into the denunciation of every possible form of internment."[22] But he provides no principled distinction, so far as I can see, between the Gulag and the carceral archipelagos. I don't believe that he can do that, not so long as he is also committed to rejecting any sort of liberalism that "sanctifies basic rights" and to blurring the line between guilt and innocence. Nor does he provide a genealogy of the Gulag and, what is probably more important, his account of the carceral archipelago contains no hint of how or why our own society stops short of the Gulag. For such an account would require what Foucault always resists: some positive evaluation of the liberal state.

Here again a comparison with Hobbes is illuminating. Hobbes thought that political sovereignty was a literal necessity—else life was nasty, brutish, and short. He supported every sort of sovereignty, and so for him tyranny was nothing more than "monarchy misliked." Foucault believes that discipline is necessary for this particular society—capitalist, modern, or whatever; he abhors all its forms, every sort of confinement and control, and so for him liberalism is nothing more than discipline concealed. For neither Hobbes nor Foucault does the constitution or the law or even the actual workings of the political system make any difference.

In fact, I think, these things make all the difference. One of Foucault's followers, the author of a very intelligent essay on *Discipline and Punish*, draws from that book and the related interviews the extraordinary conclusion that the Russian Revolution failed because it "left intact the social hierarchies and in no way inhibited the functioning of the disciplinary techniques."[23] Exactly wrong: the Bolsheviks created a new regime that overwhelmed the old hierarchies and enormously expanded and intensified the use of disciplinary techniques.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And they did this from the heart of the social system and not from what Foucault likes to call the capillaries, from the center and not the extremities. Foucault desensitizes his readers to the importance of politics; but politics matters.

Power relations, he says, "are both intentional and nonsubjective."[24] I don't know what that sentence means, but I think that the contradictory words are intended (nonsubjectively?) to apply to different levels of power. Every disciplinary act is planned and calculated; power is intentional at the tactical level where guard confronts prisoner; doctor, patient; lecturer, audience. But the set of power relations, the strategic connections, the deep functionalism of power has no subject and is the product of no one's plan. Foucault seems to disbelieve in principle in the existence of a dictator or a party or a state that shapes the character of disciplinary institutions. He is focused instead on what he thinks of as the "micro-fascism" of everyday life and has little to say about authoritarian or totalitarian politics—that is, about the forms of discipline that are most specific to his own lifetime.

VI

But these are not the forms most specific to his own country, and Foucault does believe in sticking close to the local exercise of power. Nor does he often use terms like "micro-fascism." He is not a "general intellectual" of the old sort—so he tells us—who provides an account and critique of society as a whole.[25] The general intellectual belongs to the age of the state and the party, when it still seemed possible to seize power and reconstruct society. He is, in the world of political knowledge, what the king is in the world of political power. Once we have cut off the king's head, power and knowledge alike take different forms. Foucault's more recent work is an effort to explain these forms, to work out what can be called a political epistemology. I now want to examine this epistemology, for it is the ultimate source of his anarchism/nihilism.

Sometimes Foucault seems to be committed to nothing more than an elaborate pun on the word "discipline"—which means, on the one hand, a branch of knowledge and on the other, a system of correction and control. This is his argument: social life is discipline squared. *Discipline makes discipline possible* (the order of the two nouns can be reversed). Knowledge derives from and provides the grounds for social control; every particular form of social control rests on and makes possible a particular form of knowledge. It follows that power isn't merely repressive but also creative (even if all it creates is, say, the science of penology); and similarly, knowledge isn't merely ideological but also true. But this doesn't make either power or knowledge terribly attractive. Penology is "constituted" by the prison system in the obvious sense that there could not be a study of prisoners or of the effects of imprisonment if there were no prisons. One form of discipline generates the data that makes the other possible. At the same time, penology provides both the rationale and the intellectual structure of the prison system. There could be no exercise of discipline, at least no sustained and organized exercise, without disciplinary knowledge.

It is a nice model, though perhaps a little too easy. In any case, Foucault proceeds to generalize it. "Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power."[26] So for every society, for every historical age, there is a regime of truth, unplanned but functional, generated somehow out of the network of power relations, out of the multiple forms of constraint, and enforced along with them. There are certain types of discourse that the society accepts "and makes . . . true," and there are mechanisms that enable us to distinguish true and false statements—and sanctions, so that we won't make mistakes. Foucault believes that truth is relative to its sanctions and knowledge to the constraints that produce it.

There would appear to be no independent standpoint, no possibility for the development of critical principles. Of course, one can ask the obvious questions: what is Foucault's standpoint? to what set of power relations is the genealogical antidiscipline connected? Foucault is far too intelligent not to have worried about these questions. They are standard for any relativism. He responds in two ways: first by saying, as I have already noted, that his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

genealogies are fictions waiting for the "political realities" that will make them true. Each present invents its own past, but Foucault has invented a past for some future present. At other times, Foucault says more simply that his work is made possible by the events of '68 and by subsequent local revolts here and there along the disciplinary continuum.

As the conventional disciplines are generated and validated by the conventional uses of power, so Foucault's antidiscipline is generated by the resistance to those uses. But I don't see, on Foucault's terms, how it can be validated by resistance until the resistance is successful (and it's not clear what success would mean). But perhaps, after all, the demand that Foucault show us the ground on which he stands, display his philosophical warrants, is beside the point. For he makes no demands on us that we adopt this or that critical principle or replace these disciplinary norms with some other set of norms. He is not an advocate. We are to withdraw our belief in, say, the truth of penology and then support . . . what? Not every prison revolt, for there may be some that we have "good reason" not to support. At this point, it seems to me, Foucault's position is simply incoherent. The powerful evocation of the disciplinary system gives way to an antidisciplinarian politics that is mostly rhetoric and posturing.

But there is more that has to be said. In those prison revolts with which we might rightly sympathize, the prisoners don't in fact call into question the line between guilt and innocence or the truth value of jurisprudence or penology. Their "discourse" takes a very different form: they describe the brutality of the prison authorities or the inhumanity of prison conditions, and they complain of punishments that go far beyond those to which they were legally condemned. They denounce official arbitrariness, harassment, favoritism, and so on. They demand the introduction and enforcement of what we might best call the rule of law. And these descriptions, complaints, denunciations, and demands make an important point.

Foucault is certainly right to say that the conventional truths of morality, law, medicine, and psychiatry are implicated in the exercise of power; that is a fact too easily forgotten by conventionally detached scientists, social scientists, and even philosophers. But those same truths also regulate the exercise of power. They set limits on what can rightly be done, and they give shape and conviction to the arguments the prisoners make. The limits are important even if they are in some sense arbitrary. They aren't entirely arbitrary, however, insofar as they are intrinsic to the particular disciplines (in both senses of the word). The truths of jurisprudence and penology, for example, distinguish punishment from preventive detention. And the truths of psychiatry distinguish the internment of madmen from the internment of political dissidents.

A liberal state is one that maintains the limits of its constituent disciplines and disciplinary institutions and that enforces their intrinsic principles. Authoritarian and totalitarian states, by contrast, override those limits, turning education into indoctrination, punishment into repression, asylums into prisons, and prisons into concentration camps. These are crude definitions; I won't insist upon them; amend them as you will. I only want to suggest the enormous importance of the political regime, the sovereign state. For it is the state that establishes the general framework within which all other disciplinary institutions operate. It is the state that holds open or radically shuts down the possibility of local resistance. The agents of every disciplinary institution strive, of course, to extend their reach and augment their discretionary power. Ultimately, it is only state power that can stop them. Every act of local resistance is an appeal for political or legal intervention from the center.

Consider, for example, the factory revolts of the 1930s that led (in this country) to the establishment of collective bargaining and grievance procedures, critical restraints on scientific management, which is one of Foucault's disciplines, though one that he alludes to only occasionally. Success required not only the solidarity of the workers but also at least some support from the liberal and democratic state. And success was functional not to any state but to a state of that sort; we can easily imagine other "social wholes" that would require other kinds of factory discipline.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A genealogical account of this discipline would be fascinating and valuable, and it would undoubtedly overlap with Foucault's accounts of prisons and hospitals. But if it were complete, it would have to include a genealogy of grievance procedures too, and this would overlap with an account, which Foucault doesn't provide, of the liberal state and the rule of law. Here is a kind of knowledge—political philosophy and philosophical jurisprudence—that regulates disciplinary arrangements across our society. It arises within one set of power relations and extends toward the others; it offers a critical perspective on all the networks of constraint.

This suggests that whatever the value of detailed analyses and critiques of local discipline, we still require—I don't mean that society requires, or capitalism or even socialism requires, but you and I require—what Foucault calls "general intellectuals." We need men and women who tell us when state power is corrupted or systematically misused, who cry out that something is rotten, and who reiterate the regulative principles with which we might set things right.

But I don't want to end on this last note. I don't want to ask Foucault to be uplifting. That is not the task he has set himself. The point is rather that one can't even be downcast, angry, grim, indignant, sullen, or embittered *with reason* unless one inhabits some social setting and adopts, however tentatively and critically, its codes and categories. Or unless, and this is much harder, one constructs a new setting and proposes new codes and categories. Foucault refuses to do either of these things, and that refusal, which makes his genealogies so powerful and so relentless, is also the catastrophic weakness of his political theory.

Notes

All the books cited are by Michel Foucault.

[1] *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980), p. 145.
[2] *Power/Knowledge:* p. 193.
[3] *Power/Knowledge:* p. 133.
[4] *Power/Knowledge:* p. 102.
[5] *Power/Knowledge:* p. 188.
[6] *Power/Knowledge:* p. 187.
[7] *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1980), p. 94.
[8] *Power, Truth, Strategy*, ed. Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton (Sydney, Australia: Feral, 1979), p. 60.
[9] *Power/Knowledge*, p. 98.
[10] *Power, Truth, Strategy*, p. 126.
[11] *Sexuality*, p. 96.
[12] *Power/Knowledge*, p. 143.
[13] *Power/Knowledge*, p. 62.
[14] *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979), p. 271.
[15] *Sexuality*, pp. 140-141.
[16] *Power/Knowledge*, p. 142.
[17] *Discipline and Punish*, p. 223.
[18] *Language, Counter-memory, Practice: Selected Essays & Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977), p. 230.
[19] *Language*, p. 231.
[20] *Language*, p. 227.
[21] *Power/Knowledge*, p. 130.
[22] *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 134, 136–37.
[23] Paul Patton, in *Power, Truth, Strategy*, p. 126.
[24] *Sexuality*, p. 94.
[25] *Power/Knowledge*, pp. 126ff.
[26] *Power/Knowledge*, p. 131. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The New Class: Does It Exist?

1. Dennis Wrong

Skeptical Thoughts about a Fashionable Theory

I want to argue three propositions about the social phenomenon called the "new class": (1) it may be a class, but it is not new; (2) it may be new, but it is not a class; (3) it may be both new and a class, but its appearance on the scene explains little about the political and cultural changes that modern societies are undergoing.

Put so bluntly, these propositions are reminiscent of the Jewish joke Freud told to illustrate the psychic mechanism of rationalization. Asked by a neighbor to return a borrowed pot, the borrower replied, "First, it was badly cracked when you lent it to me; second, I already returned it whole to you weeks ago; third, I never actually borrowed it from you." I have avoided such blatant self-contradiction only by conditionally accepting one claim while rejecting the next. There remains the question of what the social phenomenon called "new class" is, even if it is neither new, a class, nor of major explanatory importance. I shall try to answer this question indirectly in the course of criticizing the three claims made for the phenomenon. To be sure, we might be dealing with a mere figment of the imagination of some social analysts or an expression of their total "false consciousness," but even unicorns and mermaids were presumably distorted impressions of some real experience.

What has been called a "new class" does correspond to a real social phenomenon. It is, first, an interpretation of the manifest increase in the number of people pursuing certain occupations, some of them old, a few even ancient, access to which depends on educational credentials. In the past few decades, the ranks of doctors, lawyers, professors, public and private administrators, accountants, journalists (including those using the new nonprint media), applied scientists and technicians, social workers, nurses, psychotherapists, artists and entertainers have all swelled considerably. The expansion of these occupations and the link between most of them and higher education has been a recognized trend for a long time. But until fairly recently it was regarded as part of the overall growth of what has been variously called "the new middle classes," "new intermediate groups," the "salariat," and "white-collar" or "black-coated" workers. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the increase of this stratum has been seen as a challenge to traditional Marxist views of the class structure under capitalism and its future course of development, as in the debate over revisionism in the German Social Democratic party before the First World War and the later writings of neo- or post-Marxist German sociologists in the 1920s.

C. Wright Mills reopened the question with reference to the United States in the early 1950s. In *White Collar*, he devoted separate chapters to managers, the old professions, and intellectuals, locating these groups at the top of a "new middle class" that did not "make up one single compact stratum" but formed "a new pyramid within the old pyramid of society at large rather than a horizontal layer." Mills, in short, did not separate out those occupations

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

requiring higher education or earning a relatively high income as a new class, but continued along the Marxist lines of regarding them as a segment of the larger intermediate stratum between the dominant propertied classes and wage-earning manual workers. A few years later, however, responding to the beginnings of the New Left, Mills rejected the "labor metaphysic" of "Victorian Marxism" and proclaimed "the intellectuals" (although he had contemptuously titled the chapter on them in *White Collar* "Brains, Inc.") as the new "historic agency of change" in the West.

Mills was a post-Marxist. Therefore he did not denominate the intellectuals as a class, just as he chose for well-considered reasons to call the dominant groups in American society a "power elite" rather than a "ruling class." Yet his view of intellectuals elevated them into more weighty and politically autonomous actors than the once fashionable view of them as "alienated" pure spirits eternally criticizing from the sidelines. He made them seem more weighty and autonomous even than the Leninist or Gramscian conception of intellectuals as bearers of doctrinal truth seeking attachment to a larger plebeian class that under their guidance would be capable of becoming a force for revolutionary change. This, of course, was the source of Mills's appeal to the early New Left, which then as later was primarily a student movement. Since the New Left failed to last very long, Mills's intellectuals were transmogrified or, as it were, "Marxified" into a new class, both by former New Leftists anxious to find a more solid social base for a radical politics than the student movement and by the neoconservatives who were seeking to identify a collective agent responsible for all the changes they deplored in contemporary politics and culture.

In its recent incarnation the very term "new class" was borrowed from political dissidents in the Communist world, notably from Milovan Djilas's courageous 1957 book with that title. Although I shall concentrate on the democratic capitalist societies, those groups described as a new class in both the capitalist and the Communist worlds do have common features. Moreover, the earliest versions of a new class theory were put forward before the division into two worlds, that is, before the October Revolution in Russia.

The New Class: Is It New?

MANY OF THE OCCUPATIONS of the new class have a long history antedating the rise of capitalism. Several of them—doctors, lawyers, journalists, some kinds of teachers, municipal officials—have always been regarded as representative members of the bourgeoisie, which never consisted solely of merchants, tradesmen, and manufacturers. The overthrow of the *ancien régime* freed the learned or mentally skilled occupations from dependence on the church, the monarchy, and aristocratic patrons, enabling them to sell their services in a wider and more anonymous market paralleling the new commercial and entrepreneurial freedoms won by the owners of productive resources. The interests of the two groups converged in abolishing exclusionary privileges, territorial monopolies, and rigid social hierarchies unrelated to function.

The social transformations since the 16th century have involved not only the triumph of capitalism but also the process that Reinhard Bendix has called "intellectual mobilization," or "the growth of a reading public and of an educated secular elite dependent on learned occupations."[1] The expansion of learning and intellectual freedom was not a mere by-product of the expansion of trade and production, except in the obvious sense that the economy sets limits to the scope of activities not directly related to the satisfaction of basic material needs. It has never made sense to treat the learned occupations as mere adjuncts to a ruling capitalist class. The so-called new class has been with us for a long time, and it has sustained complex relations of interdependence with capitalists, or with private owners of the means of production in the strict sense.

What about the political and cultural attitudes of the new class that account even more than the growth of its occupations for the recent attention it has received? Have not these attitudes become increasingly hostile toward

[1] Reinhard Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), p. 266.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

business and the bourgeois ethos? A little historical perspective goes a long way, even if presented in autobiographical form.

I am myself a fourth- or fifth-generation member of the new class (though perhaps downwardly mobile within it). My paternal grandfather, who was an academic historian, became interested in his old age in his genealogical roots. In a privately printed "Chronicle of a Family," he noted that the Wrongs have never displayed much aptitude for making money, although their ranks have included doctors, lawyers, professors, clergymen, and civil servants—a veritable roster of old "new class" occupations. My maternal grandfather was also a professor (of classics) and he too descended from a long line of people in the same occupations, though with a much greater preponderance of Anglican country clergymen —literally members of "the Establishment."

I might have said that my grandfather remarked "sadly" on his family's lack of business acumen—his own father went bankrupt twice, once as farmer and once as small-town storekeeper, and my grandfather lost a lot of money in the 1929 crash. However, he made the observation with an unmistakable note of satisfaction. And therein lies the major relevance of this saga to my subject. A contempt for money-grubbing, a distaste for capitalists, or people in "trade," as persons of crass and limited vision, a commitment to what were seen as the higher things of life, a belief in service, whether to God, to learning, to the state, or to an exalted profession—all these values were characteristic of the noncapitalist segment of the bourgeoisie to which my forebears belonged. So it had been well back in the early 19th century, if not earlier.

My immediate ancestors were Anglo-Canadians, only recently removed from England. Perhaps they reflected the blend of aristocratic and bourgeois culture for which England is noted. But what of the United States, that most purely capitalist country of all, notoriously lacking any prebourgeois past? I was brought up, in fact, to think of most Americans as rich and vulgar. Yet much the same outlook prevailed among the learned professions in New England and the Northeast in general; this "genteel tradition" provided one basis for the Progressive movement early in the century. There were, moreover, close ties between the Anglo-Canadian intelligentsia and that of the Northeastern United States. Dean Acheson, for example, a friend of my family who was always described as "aristocratic" in bearing, was of Anglo-Canadian origin through both parents. Since his father was Episcopal bishop of Connecticut, he was also born a member of the disestablished American counterpart of the original Establishment.

This old "new class" spawned its own opposition. The *locus classicus* was Nietzsche's attack on the "educated philistines." Nietzsche, like Dean Acheson and my maternal grandfather, was the son of a Protestant minister; my paternal grandfather was himself a minister before becoming a professor of history. The Protestant Ethic, whatever they may have made of it, was a living reality to all of them. Rejection of its narrow, repressive and quintessentially "bourgeois individualist" aspects was central to the avant-garde culture of modernism, and it often found diverse forms of political expression. In the 1960s, strands of the antibourgeois "adversary culture" were taken up by young people and then commercially exploited. They also assumed left-wing political accents, although as recently as in the 1930s many of the same themes had been central to reactionary movements.

It was, however, a transitory moment and recent interpreters scarcely agree on its significance. For Christopher Lasch, the resultant "culture of narcissism" reflects a decadent capitalism whose main agents are the therapeutic professions. For Daniel Bell, the popularized antibourgeois culture of modernism threatens the rationality and discipline required by the economy. For the neoconservatives, the rejection of traditional bourgeois values is part of a political attack that a new class has launched on capitalism.

Certainly, the highbrow culture of modernism and the pop counterculture of the '60s are antithetical to the traditional bourgeois values of both businessmen and the old "new class" of the learned professions. But, lacking any inherent tie to an anticapitalist political mass movement, the values of this culture are also open to commercial exploitation in vulgarized form

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and are readily assimilable as personal culture, or even life-style, by the educated. Capitalism may still require rationality and work discipline but, Lasch and Bell notwithstanding, I see no reason why someone cannot work hard all day at the office or laboratory and go to an orgy in the evening. Human beings are capable of prodigious feats of compartmentalization, and economic change has increasingly separated the spheres of work and leisure.

Bourgeois values themselves just as much as antibourgeois values can be turned against capitalism or neocapitalism, as Lasch's example demonstrates. Fernand Braudel and Ernest Gellner have both remarked that the most significant thing about capitalism is that nobody invented it. It is a condition rather than a theory, a condition whose survival does not depend on the ideological indoctrination of the population living under it. Like the flush toilet—which was, to be sure, invented—capitalism may be accepted as a utility needing to be tinkered with, or as an unfortunate necessity for which no palatable alternative is available. Recent Marxists have greatly exaggerated the degree to which the supposed "ideological hegemony" of the bourgeoisie perpetuates capitalism. A matter-of-fact, often grudging acceptance of capitalism based on its manifest success in raising standards of living, the work imperatives of everyday life, and fears of revolutionary disruption have been more potent conservative forces than any ideological belief in the ultimate rightness of the system.

Yet surveys in the 1970s revealed an unmistakable departure from the old post-New Deal correlations between class and what are regarded as "liberal" or "conservative" views on various issues.[2] The change was greatest when measured by educational level, and educational differences held within broad occupational categories—professional, managerial, white-collar, blue-collar. Not surprisingly, they were most marked with respect to "social issues," the more educated holding more favorable attitudes on divorce, abortion, formerly tabooed forms of sexual behavior, and equality between the sexes. But educational differences were also present on more directly political and economic issues, with the well-educated favoring less economic growth, more government spending on urban problems, environmental protection, and education itself; they also favored busing and affirmative action to achieve racial integration, and less defense spending. On foreign policy, the more educated, in sharp contrast to the past, were more isolationist, showing a greater inclination to oppose American commitments abroad and to doubt that "communism" threatened the United States. Apart from personal impressions, these survey data provide the main basis for the claim that a new class has emerged with a distinctive, antitraditional outlook of its own.

The evidence is scarcely overwhelming. For one thing, the differences are not very great except on the moral or "life-style" issues and, to a lesser extent, on environmentalism and economic growth. Most of the surveys were taken in the middle and late 1970s, before recent sharp declines in employment and economic growth and at a time when the "Vietnam syndrome," obviously more prevalent among the educated, still governed attitudes toward foreign policy. Inevitably, many of the issues these surveys touched upon are less salient today. One may doubt whether the educated and relatively affluent remain as indifferent to concerns of economic growth and the standard of living in general. Nor does it seem likely that even a renascent political liberalism capitalizing on the failures of the Reagan administration would revive such measures as busing and affirmative action quotas or far-reaching environmental regulations. Some of the imputations to the new class of coherent and shared political and economic interests already sound dated.

The parochially American ideological preoccupations of the neoconservatives are revealed by their failure to look beyond the borders of the United States when they employ the new class concept. Not only do they never mention its namesake and possible counterpart in the Communist world; they do not even look

[2] This paragraph is chiefly based on Everett Carll Ladd, Jr., "Pursuing the New Class: Social Theory and Survey Data," in B. Bruce-Briggs, editor, *The New Class?* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), pp. 101–22. For surveys on "life-styles," see also Daniel Yankelovich, *New Rules* (New York: Random House, 1981), pp. 59–62.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

comparatively at other capitalist countries. If "postindustrial" capitalism has really produced a formidable new class with political aims that express its interests, then, like the old bourgeoisie and the old working class, it is presumably not confined to a single country.

Yet one need look no further than Britain to wonder about the alleged political unity of the new class. The major recent development in British politics has been the split in the Labour party that has produced the new Social Democratic party. Labour loyalists have argued, and the evidence seems to bear them out, that the SDP is primarily a middle-class party appealing to the very occupational and professional groups that American neoconservatives have called new class. The SDP is clearly not a party of the business community committed to unrestricted free enterprise, but its leaders quit the Labour party because they opposed the growing power of its Marxist-inclined left wing. The SDP favors a mixed economy giving far greater scope to private capital and market forces than does the Labour left. But the Labour left too is hardly proletarian in composition and support. Its activists have variously been described as "polytechnic Marxists" and even as a "bourgeois lumpen-intelligentsia"; the left's strongest union support comes from public-sector and white-collar unions.[3] The followers of both Roy Jenkins and Tony Benn therefore represent the new class, though perhaps different segments of it. The interests and political outlook of this class are evidently more diverse and ambiguous than the American neoconservatives suggest. Indeed, the neoconservatives oversimplify the relation between politics and imputed class interests as greatly as doctrinaire Marxists.

Still, the increase in the numbers of the educated and the occupations requiring educational credentials has undoubtedly weakened the past identification of many in these groups with the business community and the Republican party. There are even structural preconditions for the changes reflected in the new lifestyle differences, although hedonistic self-fulfillment and tolerance of sexual variety are continuous with the values of sexual therapists and reformers, bohemian countercultures, and the onetime literary avant-garde dating back at least to the late 19th century and the Edwardian era. The bureaucratization of capitalism severs the linkage between productive property and family stability that took the form of permanent marriage and fixed rules of descent and inheritance.[4] The erosion of puritanism and Victorian morality fits in well with the way credentialism has replaced both accumulation and hereditary transmission of private property as the basis of class position.

Is It a Class?

HAVE CREDENTIALS and the declining importance of private property produced a genuine new class rather than a congerie of diverse interest groups?

New class theorists have always moved in the ambience of Marxism. Indeed, the proletariat was the original new class assigned the mission of realizing a new social order by expropriating private owners of the means of production. Anarchist opponents of Marxism in the late 19th century argued that Marxism itself was the creation of bourgeois intellectuals masking their own aspirations to collective power by claiming to represent the proletariat. Recent versions of new class theory have resuscitated this idea; they modify it in seeing "intellectuals" not as marginal or deviant persons of bourgeois origin but as an occupationally rooted intelligentsia brought into being by the technical and organizational imperatives of industrial society.

Somewhat earlier, such groups as engineers, technicians, and salaried managers were put forward in place of the proletariat as the new class destined to supplant the bourgeoisie and reorganize society. Berle and Means's famous study and Burnham's sweeping claims in *The Managerial Revolution* precipitated an inter-

---

[3] For a short but incisive account of Labour and SDP sources of support, see Philip M. Williams, "The Rise —and Possibilities—of Britain's Social Democrats," *Dissent*, Winter 1982, pp. 70–79.

[4] The most detailed and cogent argument to this effect that I know is Bryan S. Turner, *For Weber* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981), pp. 289–317; see also Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980), pp. 102–105, 138, 180–85.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

minable debate over the significance of the separation of ownership from management under corporate enterprise. But the precise relationship between the new "new class" of professional and scientific intelligentsia and the old "new class" of managers remains somewhat obscure. Burnham himself has pungently remarked: "Who hires and fires whom? How many men can Norman Mailer or Walter Cronkite set in motion when he picks up the telephone compared to Harold Geneen or to What's-His-Name at the top of IBM? Come now."[5]

Burnham turned conservative well before the emergence of the "neo" variety, and he certainly no longer regards managers as a rising anticapitalist class already in power in the Soviet Union, with people like Harold Geneen representing its vanguard in the United States. Today neoconservative new class theorists lump owners and managers together as the embattled old capitalist class under challenge by a "new class" of the intelligentsia. On the other hand, writers who have taken a more approving view of the latter fail to distinguish sharply between managers and the professional/scientific intelligentsia, though separating both from old-style owners. B. Bruce-Briggs has done a valiant job of identifying three distinct groups in the upper reaches of American society that figure in these discussions: a "traditional bourgeoisie" of rentiers, business owners, and "free" professionals; salaried managers and engineers in the profit sector; and "intellectuals" who are salaried professionals in the nonprofit sector.[6] The latter "new class" is, of course, the *bête noire* of the neoconservatives.

The problem remains as to whether there are real class boundaries separating these groups. Alvin Gouldner differentiates the "intellectuals as a New Class" from the old "monied" or "propertied" classes, which they are destined to supplant in the West, and also from the Communist party ruling elite in the East.[7] Gouldner agrees that there is a major trend under capitalism toward the replacement of owners by managers, and he includes the latter as part of the new class. He cites Frank Parkin, who has argued that conflict between the professional/scientific intelligentsia and the political elite in Communist countries is much more acute than that between their equivalents in the "late-capitalist" West.[8]

One groans at the thought of all the ink expended on tedious and eternal disputation over definitional distinctions between "class," "stratum," and "elite." It is worth noting, however, that Parkin writes of conflicts between elites rather than classes. Andrew Hacker, who with Gouldner has made by far the most sensible case for the importance of the trend toward managerialism under capitalism, bluntly affirms that "Mills's term, 'elite,' is clearly preferable to 'class,' since it refers to individuals only for as long as they remain the occupants of particular institutional positions." He adds: "The very conception of a 'ruling class' militates against understanding capitalism today."[9]

It scarcely makes sense to draw, with the neoconservatives, a class line between those employed by the public or nonprofit sector and those working in the private or profit sector when so many members even of the old professions—for instance, law[10]—move back and forth between the two sectors. The public/private distinction, however, "brings the state back in" (in Theda Skocpol's phrase) with a vengeance and the state was, of course, always there when the new class concept was applied to Communist societies. The state is currently a very fashionable subject among academic social theorists, some of whom write as if its very existence had only recently been revealed. This

---

[5] Quoted by David T. Bazelon, "How Now 'The New Class'?" *Dissent*, Fall 1979, p. 447.

[6] B. Bruce-Briggs, "An Introduction to the Idea of the New Class," in Bruce-Briggs, ed., *The New Class?*, pp. 16–17.

[7] Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of the Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).

[8] Frank Parkin, "System Contradiction and Political Transformation," in Anthony Giddens and David Held, editors, *Classes, Power, and Conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 574–87.

[9] Andrew Hacker, "Two 'New Classes' or None?" in Bruce-Briggs, ed., *The New Class?*, p. 161.

[10] As indicated by Nathan Glazer, "Lawyers and the New Class," in Bruce-Briggs, ed., *The New Class?*, pp. 89-100; see also Bazelon, "How Now 'The New Class,'?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is especially true of Marxists eager to grant at least a "relative autonomy" to the state as they abandon the economic reductionism of traditional Marxism. Some Marxists have even written of a "state bourgeoisie" in both Communist and capitalist societies, an oxymoron that surely confuses more than it illuminates. Neoconservatives, on the other hand, have attributed dark "statist" aspirations to the educated but propertyless members of the new class whom they see as their political adversaries.

What all of these discoveries of new classes possessing or bidding for state power seem to have in common is recognition that collective power can be won and held by means other than ownership or control of private productive resources: it can be won by special knowledge or skill acquired through education, by office in public and private bureaucracies, and by leadership of popular political movements, parties, and even currents of opinion.

Does It Matter?

PERHAPS CLASSES, whether old or new, are no longer the chief collective actors of contemporary history, though they may have been in the past. Such a claim involves empirical and theoretical issues that transcend the question of whether or not there is a new class. I shall touch briefly on them in closing, drawing on the contributions to the Bruce-Briggs symposium by both Andrew Hacker and Daniel Bell. Hacker and Bell are alone among the contributors in forthrightly rejecting the new class concept. In addition, Hacker and Bell are, not by coincidence, among the few contributors who cannot be classified as neoconservatives. Nor are they Old Believers, whether of the left or the right, convinced that the traditional division between owners and workers remains the fulcrum of the class structure of capitalism.

Hacker begins by sharply distinguishing between the old and new versions of a new class: the managers, on the one hand, and the professional/scientific intelligentsia on the other, two groups "with almost no overlap in membership." He repeats an argument he has developed before to the effect that the aggregate of What's-Their-Names at the top of IBM, General Motors, Exxon, *et al.* do not constitute a class.[11] Their tenure at the top is too brief and comes too late in life, not before their late fifties or sixties and after what Mills once called "the long bureaucratic crawl" upward; their origins are modestly middle-class, and their education usually was not acquired at private schools or the more distinguished universities. Although they acquire stock in the companies they work for, they do not build up their portfolios until they are near the top and their holdings are relatively modest, far from placing them in the super-rich category.

Power, Hacker contends, resides not in a class of owners and managers, nor in one of partially owning managers, but in the corporate organizations themselves. The collectivity that wields power is the organizational structure itself in which the managers hold high positions, not a ruling class that uses and controls this structure in the service of its interests. This seems to me a much more authentically institutional, or "structural" to use that much-abused word, view than the notion of a propertied ruling class held together by family ties and a common upper-class subculture. For those who need the authority of Karl Marx to legitimate it, Hacker notes its consistency with the discussion of the joint-stock company in the third volume of *Capital*, the discussion that Bell once called Marx's "schema two" for capitalist development as distinct from his better-known forecast of increasing polarization of owning and nonowning classes.[12]

Individual corporate organizations are not, of course, autonomous actors. Their directorates interlock with those of other corporations and of banks and financial institutions. Critics of the original managerial revolution thesis were clearly right to insist that corporations remain capitalist profit-seeking enterprises whether they are controlled by owners or by managers, quite apart from the very consider-

[11] Hacker does this, most fully, in "What Rules America?" *New York Review of Books*, May 1, 1975, pp. 9–13; also in "Cutting Classes," *New York Review of Books*, March 4, 1976, pp. 15–18.

[12] Hacker, "Two 'New Classes' or None?" p. 161; Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), pp. 54–63; also Parkin, "System Contradiction," pp. 576–78.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

able problems of definition and empirical measurement in determining which is which. Hacker, Maurice Zeitlin,[13] and others have also noted that there are no marked differences in economic behavior between corporations classified as ownership-controlled and those seen as management-controlled. Certainly, there are heirs of the original founding owners of the major corporations who continue to draw large incomes from them, although their money, like invested trade-union pension funds, is usually managed by professional trustees. Let us apply to them what I like to call the Saint-Simon "drop dead" test.[14] Suppose that all members of the 25,000 families in the United States owning (in 1974) over $1 million worth of paper assets, mostly in the form of stock,[15] were suddenly to expire, stricken with a mysterious fatal disease or perhaps liquidated in an unbelievably efficient Red Brigades action. Would their removal in itself change "the system," bring about a fundamental "structural" transformation of American society? I think not.

In short, the relative or absolute autonomy of corporations vis-à-vis a dominant propertied class—their relation to the state raises questions of a different order—does not mean that we live in a postcapitalist society. We do live, however, in a postbourgeois society in two senses: (1) There is no longer a ruling class of private owners of the means of production; (2) the old bourgeois culture of asceticism, the work ethic, deferred gratification, and repressive familial and sexual morality has dissolved.

As for the second "new class," Hacker dismisses it as no more than a collection of new service occupations entered by means of educational credentials whose practical value he questions in sardonic remarks and anecdotes.

Bell provides a more detailed analysis of the irreducible heterogeneity of this alleged new class, although his earlier writings had been widely, if incorrectly, understood as supporting what he now calls a "muddled concept." Bell identifies six distinct groups: intellectuals, mainly scientists and scholars; creators and critics of culture; transmitters of knowledge and culture; news and entertainment workers—usually designated as "the media"; appliers and transmitters of knowledge organized in the old and new professions, and managers and bureaucrats, or the old version of the new class.[16] These groups not only differ, but each group is internally differentiated.

More important, all six groups are distributed unevenly among five of what Bell calls situses, defined as "vertically organized locations of *interest-bound* activities": economic and business enterprises, government, universities and research organizations, "social complexes" (hospitals, schools, community organizations), and the military. The interests and allegiances of members of the new class are therefore fragmented by occupation or profession and by the situs where they are employed, not to speak of the particular organizations they work for, which was true also, of course, of the old bourgeoisie. Thus there is little basis for a common interest leading to the emergence of a shared "class consciousness" expressed politically. Bell concludes that "the idea of a 'new class' . . . cannot be located in social-structural terms; it must be found in cultural attitudes."

Alvin Gouldner, on the other hand, adduces precisely a common culture, which he calls the "Culture of Critical Discourse," to support his conception of intellectuals, both East and West, as a true new class. Evoking Marxist echoes, he even suggests that it is a "universal class" supplanting the proletariat, albeit a "flawed" one. Since I am on record as admiring Gouldner's lengthy final book, I trust that I may be forgiven for saying that his penultimate short one on the new class was not one of his happier efforts.[17] Yet even Gouldner describes

---

[13] Maurice Zeitlin, "Corporate Ownership and Control: The Large Corporation and the Capitalist Class," in Giddens and Held, eds., *Classes, Power, and Conflict*, pp. 205–207.

[14] In 1819, Henri de Saint-Simon suggested that the instantaneous loss of all of France's courtiers, state officials, and church dignitaries would do little permanent damage to French society. By contrast, the sudden elimination of the country's leading craftsmen, scientists, and artists would transform the nation into a "lifeless corpse" that would require at least a generation to revive.

[15] Statistic from Hacker, "Cutting Classes," p. 15.

[16] Daniel Bell, "The New Class: A Muddled Concept," in Bruce-Briggs, ed., *The New Class?*, pp. 182–83.

[17] See Dennis Wrong, "A Note on Marx and Weber in Gouldner's Thought," *Theory and Society* 11 (1982), pp. 899-905. See also my earlier review of Gouldner's *The Two Marxisms* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980) in *The New Leader*, May 19, 1980, pp. 16-18.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there classes as "cache areas in which political organizations mobilize, recruit and conscript support and in whose name they legitimate their struggle. Classes as such are never united in struggle against others."[18] Classes, in other words, are always partly ideological constructs, although there are good grounds for thinking that this is even more the case today than in the past. Both Hacker and Bell accentuate in different ways the primacy of organizations over classes. If I may quote another older authority, completely free of any conservative taint, Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills wrote 30 years ago: "The bureaucratization of modern government, of corporate business life, the spread of totalitarian, one-party states may be more dynamic than all the riots, mobs, and crowds of the last fifty years put together from all over Western civilization."[19]

Future social analysts could do worse than to inscribe on their banners: "The history of presently existing society is the history of organizational struggles."

---

[18] Gouldner, *The Future of the Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, p. 31.

[19] Hans Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1953), p. 417.

This is a shorter, somewhat recast version of a paper presented at a plenary session of the American Sociological Association's annual meeting in San Francisco, September 8, 1982. I am grateful to the late Erving Goffman for having invited me to participate in the session. □

2. Jean L. Cohen

Skeptical Thoughts from another Direction

A new idea has appeared amid the debris of what was once a powerful theory: the Marxist concept of class has been revived and applied, at last, to that elusive stratum, the intellectuals. From standpoints as diverse as left-Hegelianism, East European dissidence, the American New Left, and contemporary neoconservatism, the old themes of the "treason of the clerks," the "managerial revolution," and the "new class" have reemerged in a new form. The thread connecting this diversity is the transference of the class analysis of Marxism from workers to intellectuals. Critique, participation, equality, social justice and freedom—all of these, it is now said, are nothing more than an ideological cover behind which the intellectuals advance their own class power against both capital and labor.[1]

Although many of the proponents of this thesis are decidedly anti-Marxist, the theoretical strategy they employ, or manipulate, is informed by Marxist theory. It would, of course, be informative and entirely unobjectionable if they simply set about to describe the large-scale shifts in the intellectuals' power, privilege, and status generated by changes in the structure of labor and the role of knowledge in modern society. But all these theorists go beyond descriptive analysis to assert that a particular class interest exists for a wide spectrum of intellectuals that, often unbeknown to them, unites them in a project of class rule.

---

[1] See Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class* (New York: Seabury, 1979); George Konrád and Ivan Szelényi, *The Intellectuals on the Road to Class Power* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979); Barbara and John Ehrenreich, "The Professional-Managerial Class," in *Between Labor and Capital*, Pat Walker, ed. (Boston: South End Press, 1979). *The New Class?*, Bruce Briggs, ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1979), includes essays by Jeane Kirkpatrick, Irving Kristol, Seymour Martin Lipset, Aaron Wildavsky, and others.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Through a brief discussion of the main versions of this theory, I want to show that the unreflective and at times cynical use of Marxist concepts obfuscates rather than illuminates the social dynamics of contemporary society.[2] Even more important, I hope to demonstrate that the unintended (in some cases, however, intended) consequence of the social criticism of intellectual power is to disable all social criticism and to divert attention from the legitimate role intellectuals have to play in potentially progressive social movements.

The political and theoretical conclusions reached by application of the Marxist theory of class to intellectuals are both ambiguous and contradictory. Alvin Gouldner, George Konrád and Ivan Szelényi employ the class concept against, among others, the historical carriers of the theory—Marxist-Leninists—yet see the coming to power of the intellectual class as inevitable. Barbara and John Ehrenreich use it to vindicate a quasi-Leninist strategy. The "new right" wields the class concept against all intellectuals who are critical of the status quo. All these writers, using a simplistic version of the Marxist critique of ideology, "unmask" the claims of intellectuals to represent, articulate, or even think in terms of universal principles as a subterfuge to conceal their interests "on the road to class power." Despite the variety of political positions informing these theories, the anti-intellectualism of all of them, together with the attack on "ideology" (intellectual transcendence) in the name of "realism" (analysis of class interests), reinforces the status quo against its critics.

Gouldner's simple little book is the most faithful to the classic Marxist theory of revolution and class. It deviates from the original only with regard to the class agent of political transformation. Indeed, it is quite easy to be confused as to whether in this analysis the new intellectual class substitutes for the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. The book's intentions are clear in one respect—Gouldner wants to dispense once and for all with any claims of intellectuals (specifically Marxists) that they selflessly represent the interests of other strata. He rejects both the Gramscian position that intellectuals are capable only of representing the interests of other classes and the Mannheimian view that they are able to embody and represent universality.

Instead, Gouldner maintains that intellectuals are a class with specific interests, already in control of the means of production and violence through their scientific and technical knowledge. Produced in the universities and reproduced on an expanding scale owing to the educational and communications revolutions, the "knowledge class" has, according to Gouldner, elaborated an ideology and a culture. The ideology of professionalism serves to justify the intellectuals' guildlike privilege and power. Their common "culture of critical discourse" distinguishes them linguistically from others, and devalues the claims to authority of the old ruling class (the capitalists or bureaucrats). Voluntary consent, context-free knowledge, and claims of scientific justification of truth—all inherent in the "culture of critical discourse"—are the basis for the rejection of any authority other than the rule of reason and the knowledge that it establishes. This culture is thereby the core of an ideology with universalist claims for a potential ruling class—the technical and humanist intellectuals.

GOULDNER MAINTAINS that the particular interests of this new class are to increase its share of the GNP, to acquire positions of power that will enable it to ensure its privilege, and to control its work setting. Intellectuals have a class interest in creating a statist society in which both bureaucracy and capitalists will be "expropriated." They cannot be content with their privileges in the given system because:

(1) their upward mobility is artificially blocked by capitalists and bureaucrats;

(2) they suffer a status disparity between their functional importance to the system and their relatively low enjoyment of power and wealth;

(3) their technical interests are stymied;

(4) they are underemployed and overproduced;

(5) their very culture urges them to a stance of

[2] For a critique of the Ehrenreichs' version of the theory, see Jean L. Cohen and Dick Howard, "Why Class?" in *Between Labor and Capital*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

permanent criticism, generating a moralizing commitment to represent the "social totality."

Accordingly, the intellectuals' political strategy will be a combination of vanguardism and alliance with all oppressed groups to overthrow capitalism. The revolutionary ideology of this class will fuse themes of worker control, meritocracy, and a principle of distributive justice based on the old socialist ideal of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work"—with intellectual work accorded the highest value.

It would be a mistake, however, to take this analysis as a warning against Machiavellian designs. Gouldner insists that intellectuals are not simply a particularistic class disguising its interests as universal; they are really a "flawed universal class." The utter confusion of orthodox Marxism and anti-Marxism in the overall approach yields this surprise ending. The new class is "a flawed universal class" because it cultivates its own particular guild interests, but at the same time it embodies the universal interest.

It turns out that the new intellectual class is "the most progressive force in history," that the "culture of critical discourse" is a harbinger of freedom, that the attack on the old order really represents the interests of (almost) everyone. The intellectual class *is* universal and progressive; elitism is only its "flaw." Clearly Gouldner's work dispenses with some Marxist dogma while retaining, rather blindly, the method and assumptions of the theory as a whole.

It is difficult to see just what, besides an indefensible evolutionism, the class theory of intellectuals *adds* to the common analyses of the privilege and power of intellectual strata. Its sole new twist consists in the uninspiring exercise of applying the Marxist version of class theory to Marxists, among other intellectuals, who presume selflessly to articulate the needs of other oppressed groups. The drawback of this theory is, however, quite clear. The claim that principles of consent, equality, and critique are simply or mainly the class ideology of intellectuals undermines Gouldner's *own* progressivist conclusions and, more seriously, undermines the possibility of critical discourse.

The "new intellectual class" thesis has been formulated in a more sophisticated manner by Konrád and Szelényi. Their book links an informative historical sociology to a structural analysis of the one social system to which they apply the thesis: Soviet-type "state socialism." The unique feature of this system—the penetration of society by the state—inspires Konrád and Szelényi to offer what they call a "post-Marxist" analysis of the new mechanisms of stratification and power to be found there.

This "post-Marxist" impulse is expressed in two ways: the state is viewed as a stratification mechanism in its own right (it does more than just "reflect" class relations), and modern civil society is analytically distinguished from capitalism in the context of a political project calling for a socialist civil society. It is all the more distressing, then, to find these impulses continually frustrated by a reconstructed Marxism, with the "mode of production," a two-class model, and "appropriation and control of the surplus product" used as the key criteria for class boundaries.

Clearly, Konrád and Szelényi wanted to present their work as a sort of *Capital* of the state socialist systems. But their analysis is prevented from articulating what is new about the structures of domination and stratification in these societies by their repeated use of categories that had been generated within an entirely different social system, namely, capitalism. Their arguments for the presence of a new intellectual class in the East are, consequently, far less convincing than those they bring against the same thesis in the West.

According to Konrád and Szelényi, the market and redistributive mechanisms of "state monopoly capitalism" lead to the proliferation of intellectual strata between capital and labor. Defined as monopolistic proprietors of "transcontextual knowledge," intellectuals in the West are divided into scientific/technical, managerial, bureaucratic, elite cultural, and marginalized humanistic strata. The key argument against viewing these strata as a class is, ironically, a Marxist one: in the West there is no structure that could unify their interests and also unify the centrifugal tendencies of the stratification mechanisms at work.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Moreover, the principles that legitimate the privileged status of some sectors of intellectuals—professionalism plus the culture of critical discourse—must compete with others, whose force is hardly spent: private property and the political representation of interests within a parliamentary state. Despite the redistributive mechanisms of the welfare state, within this framework of the separation of state and society and the continued importance of the market, professionalism acquires the force of a legitimating ideology for intellectual privilege. Only Gouldner's confusion of privilege with the locus and logic of power could enable him to claim a dominant and class status for intellectuals in the West.

Obviously, the thesis that intellectuals form a class in "state socialism" rests on the claim to have found a unifying structure. For Konrád and Szelényi, the ideology of "teleological rational redistribution" and the central planning mechanism of a state that has thoroughly penetrated society serve to fuse the privilege and power of intellectuals into a class position. "Teleological rational redistribution" is the legitimating ideology of the party/state, whose leaders and ideologists claim that it plans according to scientific criteria (teleology, rationality) and distributes goods and rewards according to socialist principles (equality, justice). Instead of pursuing the theme of the "primacy of the political," however, our authors focus on the political-economic function of the planner/redistributor. Control over surplus remains the key to their class analysis. Stratification is thus analyzed in traditional Marxist categories. This bias distorts the sociological argument as well as the critique of intellectuals.

Although it is conceded that only one sector of the dominant class of intellectuals actually rules—the political bureaucracy of the party—the structure of central planning serves as the locus from which an objective class interest to rule is imputed by Konrád and Szelényi to all intellectuals. All privilege and power reside in a single structure. Technical, managerial, bureaucratic, and humanistic intellectuals all are encompassed within a system that gives them advantages over the other main class of society—the direct producers. Despite power struggles among its various factions, Konrád and Szelényi argue that the new intellectual class shares the legitimating ideology of "rational redistribution" and planning. Indeed, the defense of this ideology is also in the interest of those seeking to replace the party elite. The principle of rational redistribution would be fully consistent with the class power of intellectuals only in a technocracy. Only if the scientific/technical sector of the intellectual class displaced the old party elite and occupied the key power positions in the state, and so abolished irrational political criteria in enterprise management, would the class power of intellectuals and their ideology be fully reconciled. We have thus come full circle. A typically Marxist two-class model, which sets those men and women who control the economic surplus against the direct producers of that surplus, reappears at the heart of the analysis.

The flaw in this approach is the confusion of two rather different structures and principles of stratification. The structural position of "rational redistributor" obeys a political-economic logic (planning) that is not adequately distinguished from the "primacy of the political," or the domination of society by the state and of the state by the party. The goals of efficient expanded production and reproduction, on the one hand, and the expansion and duplication of the state structure, on the other, are by no means identical. The point at issue here is the following: whereas the "post-Marxist" impulse of Konrád and Szelényi points to the state as *the* stratifying mechanism, their Marxism reduces this insight to the observation that the state as economic actor or planner creates a hierarchy of income and privilege. Only the economic function of the state is addressed, not its political dynamic.

Were these authors really to get at the unique features of stratification in statist systems, they would have had to focus on the *political* logic of the centralization and appropriation of power and the suppression of any and all counterpowers (publics, unions, voluntary associations, and so on). It is the primacy of the political, and not planning per se, that requires the total abolition of an autonomous civil society. Here is a principle of stratification quite different from the distribution and con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

trol of the surplus product, however the two might be related.

There is thus a persistent ambiguity as to whether it is the position of redistributor/planner or the position of the party that makes for the unity of the dominant groups. The "state socialist" system is not analyzed in terms of these two, often noncomplementary, stratification principles. For, as we know, Marxist class theory allows only one core structure per system. Hence the view that the present party/state is transitional to the pure system of rational redistribution, with the odd implication that only the central planner, but not the party, is a structural feature of the system.

The theory of an intellectual class thus prevents an adequate articulation of the stratification and structure of statist systems. Like its counterpart in the West, this approach leaves one with no means to address the needs and struggles of those challenging the system. Indeed, Konrád and Szelényi rejoin Gouldner in rejecting all appeals to universal norms and transcendence. This leaves the critic of intellectual hubris and pretension with a dilemma. It is, to be sure, important to show that neither intellectuals nor any other stratum can embody universality or be free from particular interests. But the attack on all intellectual claims to selfless transcendence is reminiscent of the old Stalinist trick of discrediting the discourse by referring to the class origins of its authors.

The work of Konrád and Szelényi reduces the "culture of critical discourse" to a particular interest; social critique is stripped of its project (to articulate and discuss universal values); knowledge is relativized and situated vis-à-vis a class. Accordingly, the authors' own critical intentions are severely impaired. For the attack on *any* reference to universality implies that the intellectual can and should articulate only his own particular interests. One is left with the arbitrary choice of defending the particular interests of a group out of power against the particular interests of those in power. Not surprisingly, Konrád and Szelényi revert to a form of populism, choosing incomprehensibly to embrace the particular interests of the "direct producer." Unlike their Marxist predecessors, however, they can claim neither the universality of the class, nor the certainty of history, nor morality itself as the basis of their choice. Even their advocacy of the reconstitution of civil society in a socialist form (a theoretical anticipation of Polish Solidarity) is disarmed by their insistent antiuniversalism.

The attack on intellectual arrogance throws out the baby with the bath water. Arguing that universality cannot be carried by a class, Konrád and Szelényi are led to reject all arguments rooted in anything other than interest. To be sure, no group or class can fully embody universality. Yet the socialist civil society that Konrád and Szelényi see would have to rest on universal principles of nonexclusion, democratic participation, formal law, individual rights, diversity and conflict of interests—if free public spaces and self-managing autonomous organizations are to be among its institutional forms. The tensions in this best of all versions of the thesis of the new intellectual class derive from the incompatibility of Marxist theory with the development of an adequate account of civil society.

The self-hatred of critical intellectuals gives ammunition to those who hate the intellect. The attack on the "culture of critical discourse" from the left has the unintended consequence of reinforcing the arguments of the "new right." It is, of course, granting too much to call the complaints about the rise of a new intellectual class raised by neoconservatives such as Irving Kristol, Seymour Martin Lipset, Aaron Wildavsky, Jeane Kirkpatrick and others a *theory* at all. But it is certainly a powerful ideology with a very obvious political thrust. Here the concept of class is used to attack the redistributive mechanisms of the welfare state (except for those that aid corporations) and to stigmatize all (other) critics of the status quo as self-serving power seekers concerned with consolidating and expanding their own class dominance.

There is certainly nothing new in conservative attacks on intellectuals.[3] What is new

[3] The long list extends from Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: Bobbs-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about the recent neoconservative broadside is the clever use of Marxist formula to discredit social movements concerned with emancipation, egalitarian ideals, social justice, and political freedom. The theory that a new intellectual class, through relentless criticism of all authority, is destroying order and rationality, is at least in part a response to a feared breakdown of the stratification system and the ideologies that have until now justified domination and inequality. Indeed, the alarmist references to the dissolution of the work ethic, the new narcissism, the loss of respect for authority, the irresponsibility of intellectuals, and so on, if taken together with the theory of the new intellectual class, can be seen as an effort to resolve the ideological crisis of the welfare state in a regressive direction.

The theory of the new intellectual class thus creates strange bedfellows. The obvious response to such confusion should be that the concept of class, whether in the form of a revised or a distorted Marxism, cannot come to grips with the phenomena addressed. Before we can accept the empirical insights of class analysis, it would be well to revise the theoretical framework that lends meaning to such insights. Instead of guiltily embracing the self-destructive thesis I have just described, intellectuals ought to reflect anew on the place of criticism within society and in relation to social movements. The alternatives to such reflection are dogmatism and cynicism. □

Merrill, paper, 1955) to Raymond Aron, *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1957). Most of the neoconservatives use Tocqueville as their main referent. This is a misuse of a major thinker for political purposes contrary to the thrust of his thought. For it was Tocqueville's thesis that intellectuals in France prior to the Revolution engaged in abstract political reflection that was both dangerous and destructive because they were *denied* access to meaningful participation in public life—because they did not have political *experience*, i.e., the experience of freedom. Thus the myth-making of intellectuals regarding politics derived not from their excess power or their striving for power, but from their exclusion from the public realm. The receptivity to their ideas among the populace derived from the same deficiency—the absence of democratic public spaces for participation and for the genesis of public will and virtue.

dissent **Major Sales Outlets for Our Magazine in New York City:**

BARNES & NOBLE, ANNEX
126 5th Ave. (18th St.)

BARNES & NOBLE
56 W. 9th St.

BRENTANO'S
20 University Place (9th St.)

BRENTANO'S
11 West 47th St.

COLISEUM BOOKS
1771 Broadway (57th St.)

B. DALTON
109 East 42nd St.

EASTERN NEWSSTANDS:
30 Rockefeller Plaza
350 5th Ave.
540 Madison Ave.
200 Park Ave.

EASTSIDE BOOKSTORE
34 St. Mark's Place

ENDICOTT BOOKS
450 Columbus Ave.

HUDSON EMPORIUM
428 Hudson St.

HUDSON STREET PAPERS
581 Hudson St.

HYDE PARK STATIONERS
992 Madison Ave.

IDLE HOURS
59 Greenwich Ave.

THE MAGAZINE STORE
Broadway bet. 62nd & 63rd St.

PAPYRUS BOOKSTORE
2915 Broadway (114th St.)

PARSLEY SAGE, INC.
73 7th Ave. (Barrow)

PERIODIC NEWSSTAND
405 6th Ave.

RADICONE BROS. NEWSSTAND
1 East 42nd St. (5th Ave.)

RUTKIN NEWSSTAND
42nd St. (5th-6th Ave.)

SHAH STATIONERY
2795 Broadway (107th-108th)

ST. MARK'S BOOKSHOP
13 St. Mark's Place

STATE NEWS STORE
1243 3rd Ave.

TRIPLET STATIONERY
401 E. 57th St. (1st Ave.)

WEST FOURTH STREET BOOK STORE 148 West 4th St.

Y.M.C.
7 E. 8th St.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Norman Waitzman

A Sorcerer in Search of Sources

The Wizardry of George Gilder

When David Stockman, the Sorcerer of supply-side Fantasia, characterized George Gilder's *Wealth and Poverty* as "Promethean in intellectual power and insight," Gilder quickly gained prominence as a New Right ideologue. After Ronald Reagan seconded the motion, Gilder became the Sorcerer's Apprentice.

It now turns out that Gilder has imitated Stockman in several respects. A close look at Gilder's sources indicates that his best-seller was something of a Trojan Horse. When correct, the book's sources often contradict Gilder's citation. When they jibe with Gilder, they are often unfounded.

Consider his citations on welfare. For Gilder, government is a colossal insurance company whose excessive generosity has created perverse incentives and a gross dependency. The present welfare system, says Gilder, creates poverty:

> Unemployment compensation promotes unemployment. Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) makes more families dependent and fatherless. Disability insurance in all its multiple forms encourages promotion of small ills into temporary disabilities and partial disabilities into total and permanent ones. Social Security payments may discourage concern for the aged. . . .

I: Methodological Errors

RELYING SOLELY on a Heritage Foundation study by Charles Hobbs, Gilder maintains that welfare programs in the U.S. grew one and a half times as fast as GNP and three times as fast as wages during the 1970s (even though his source covers only 1971-76). And he says that these programs paid out $200 billion worth of benefits to 50 million individuals annually (even though his expanded definition of "welfare" did not reach $200 billion until 1977). Dividing the expenditure figure by the recipient figure for 1976 yields $3,740 in benefits per recipient, prompting Gilder to allege that the "average welfare family of four" received a whopping $15,000 worth of subsidies in 1976 and close to $18,000 worth in 1979. These estimates, which Gilder calls "real averages, not extreme cases," are then compared to the median income for all households—$14,500 in 1976 and $16,500 in 1979. In other words, it pays for average householders to quit their jobs and go on the dole.

Gilder and his source are wrong. They base their analysis, first of all, on misleading comparisons and a faulty method—multiplying average individual benefits by the size of the "typical" welfare family. (Surely, such a procedure ignores the fact that welfare benefits do not increase proportionately with family size.) Second, the size of the average welfare family is exaggerated; the overlap between recipients of various programs is severely overestimated; administrative *costs* of programs are treated as *benefits* received—and all these contentions act to skew Gilder's welfare estimate upward. Correcting a few of these methodological and mechanical errors yields $10,000 in benefits for a family of four in 1976, not $15,000.

But far more is wrong with Gilder's analysis. His conceptual bias, for example, leads him to include in the "welfare budget" programs for which the typical welfare family is either ineligible or has no use. It leads him also to treat public goods as private goods and in-kind transfers as cash equivalents where they clearly are not, and to figure growth rates in a way that grossly distorts them. When the welfare family's benefits are figured from the bottom up, so as to correct many of these errors, it becomes clear that a very generous estimate of their magnitude, even when incorporating less widespread benefits such as housing subsidies, amounts to $7,750 in 1976—about half of Gilder's projection. Moreover, the typical welfare benefits have in real terms shrunk since then because of inflation—a trend that, of course, discredits Gilder's entire thesis that perverse incentives have spread throughout the country owing to the growth of welfare statism.

(1) GILDER ALERTS US early in the text to the legerdemain of the statistician, writing, "The statistician can make great play with medians . . . and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

means or averages." But Gilder should heed his own admonition, since he himself compares a *mean* estimate (of welfare benefits) to a *median* estimate (of income). To gather what this signifies, consider that the mean (or what is commonly called the average) of three numbers, say 1, 10, and 100, is 37, while the median is 10 (the middle number). Since income distribution is highly skewed in the U.S. (a substantial proportion of the income goes to the rich), the mean income is significantly higher than the median, typically by 20 percent. Rather than $16,500 in 1979, for example (which is lower than Gilder's welfare estimate), the mean income of all households was $19,554 (higher than his welfare estimate).

(2) Why does Gilder compare the welfare estimate for a family of *four* to the median income of *all* households, most of which have fewer than four members? The relevant comparison is between families of the same size. In 1979, for example, the mean income for a family of four was $25,050, that is, 50 percent higher than the $16,500 he cites.

The entire comparison is thereby put into a new perspective when noncomparables are made comparable. Gilder's welfare estimate is 30 percent lower than the mean income of comparable households, not, as he alleges, 10 percent higher.

(3) Hobbs and hence Gilder arrive at the "typical" family's welfare estimate by dividing an estimate of the "welfare budget" by an estimate of the number of welfare recipients so as to obtain an individual welfare estimate. This number is then multiplied by four to obtain the "typical" family's welfare benefit.

Yet the more children there are in a welfare family (everything else being equal), the less benefits per family member are received. A mother and one child receive proportionately more benefits than a mother and two children, and so on. To uniformly apply an individual benefit as a multiplier, as Hobbs and Gilder do, skews the estimated benefits of larger families higher than they really are.

(4) This flaw is compounded because Gilder chooses to make the size of the typical welfare family larger than it really is. The median size of households below the poverty level is two, not four. Social Security payments, comprising one quarter of the estimated "welfare budget," go on average to a household of two. Indeed, the mean and median size of families receiving such benefits as Food Stamps, Medicaid, and public, subsidized housing is three or less, not four. In other words, even if we accept Gilder's estimate of $3,740 per individual and the highly questionable methodology, the "typical" welfare family of *two* and *three* would receive $7,500 and $11,220 respectively, not $15,000.

(5) Since the average individual benefit is figured by dividing the "welfare budget" by the "welfare population," anything that decreases the former or increases the latter would act to shrink the size of this benefit.

Consider the estimate of 47.5 million "welfare" recipients in 1976. It is based on the number of people receiving Medicare, Medicaid, and veterans' health benefits, and assumes that all welfare recipients get benefits from at least one of these programs. Yet what of recipients of unemployment compensation and school lunches, many of whom do *not* benefit from these three programs?

For 1979, for example, the Census Bureau estimates that 6.5 million households received unemployment compensation, representing 21 million individuals. Of those, at most 25 percent received Medicaid, Medicare, or any kind of veterans' benefit; 15.8 million received none of these. Charles Hobbs and hence George Gilder make the same error with respect to school lunches, unjustifiably excluding 5.5 million from the welfare population estimate. In a feeble attempt to compensate for these substantial exclusions from the recipient estimate, Hobbs and Gilder tag on an extra 2.5 million, bringing their final estimate to an even 50 million. But as shown above, the welfare population in 1976, a year that witnessed more households taking unemployment compensation than 1979, was, at minimum, 68.8 million persons, not 50 million.

(6) At the same time, the estimated welfare budget is too high because various administrative costs of programs are treated as benefits received by the welfare population. Based on figures in the U.S. budget, it is probable that the average administrative cost is about 8 percent of the total welfare budget. After adjusting the welfare budget and the welfare population accordingly, the estimate for the average benefit per individual is trimmed to $2,500 in 1976. The corresponding benefit for a household of four, even ignoring errors (3) and (4), is $10,000 for 1976, two-thirds of the $15,000 Gilder estimate.

II: Substantive Errors

IS SOCIAL SECURITY "WELFARE"? Are workers' compensation payments, Financial Assistance for Higher Education, community alcoholism treatment, special benefits for disabled coal miners,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Indian benefits, veterans' benefits, all to be huddled under the rubric "welfare"? For Hobbs and Gilder, yes.

(7) A Joint Economic Committee study, however, notes that income security programs fall into three general types—aid to the needy, social insurance, and deferred compensation. While Gilder cites programs from all three categories, it is evident that his main concern is with the first: aid to the needy. It is this more popular conception of the welfare recipient—the poor, generally female-headed household receiving AFDC, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and subsidized housing—that also elicits Gilder's vituperation:

> The fundamental fact in the lives of the poor in most parts of America today is that the wages of common labor are far below the benefits of AFDC, Medicaid, Food Stamps, public housing, public defenders, leisure time, and all the other services of the welfare state.

This is factually incorrect. In 1976, AFDC, Food Stamps, and Medicaid payments amounted to $6,000 on average, for a welfare family of four. Though Gilder argues that these programs are the tip of the iceberg, they indeed are the iceberg. While the vast majority of households that receive AFDC or other public assistance income also receive Food Stamps and Medicaid, they generally do not receive veterans' benefits, unemployment compensation, Social Security, supplemental security income, and others on Gilder's list. Free or reduced-price school lunches and public or subsidized-rent housing, however, do reach a larger proportion of AFDC households (43 percent and 18 percent respectively) than the programs just listed. If all of the funds targeted for lunches and housing were diverted solely to AFDC recipients, the welfare family of four in 1976 would be better off by $1,750. Thus a generous estimate of the cash equivalent of yearly benefits for a welfare family of four in 1976 is $7,750, well below the wages of working families.

(8) Gilder asserts that poor families on welfare do as well as two full-time workers together at the minimum wage:

> Poor families alone . . . received average benefits that brought them 30% above the official poverty line, something that could only be achieved by two full-time workers at the minimum wage.

Though the passage is footnoted, the citation, a *New York Times* article, refutes rather than supports Gilder's contention. The figures cited from various studies on New York's AFDC, Food Stamp, and housing programs corroborate the evidence in (7) above, which counters Gilder's figures. Also, the evidence is for New York only, while Gilder's claim covers the entire nation. It is common knowledge that New York welfare benefits far exceed the nation's average.

(9) A "resourceful welfare family" with no aged members, Gilder says, "could get benefits from seventeen programs. . . ." Wrong again. Only an atypical family contending with a special host of deleterious circumstances including, among others, a child or mother with a handicap, a legal problem affecting large groups of low-income persons, an infant who does not have access to essential nutrients, a language barrier in school, could tap into all 17 programs that Gilder cites.

The bulk of the programs that are additions to the typical family's welfare benefits cited in (7) do not provide cash benefits or even services that remotely resemble what an individual would or could purchase. Financial Assistance for Elementary and Secondary Education, for example, awards grants to *school districts* to provide facilities for the handicapped and to administer special programs, such as bilingual education. One can go out and purchase bilingual teaching in the public schools just about as easily as one could lay claim to a prorated strip of public road or a share of national security. And just as it would be an absurd exercise to divide the military budget by the nation's population and declare that national security adds $3,500 onto the income of the average family of four, so it is absurd to perform the same exercise regarding welfare services of the same public character.

(10) Gilder assumes that an in-kind transfer costing a dollar has the same value as a dollar in cash. Consider a situation where, in lieu of a salary of $10, one is given a nontransferable coupon for $10 in ice cream. Mainstream economics tells us that unless the person with the coupon would ordinarily spend all $10 on ice cream, the ice cream, while it may have cost society $10 to produce, is not worth $10 to the purchaser. Part of the value of the coupon is lost in the circumscription of choice.

How then are Food Stamps, Medicaid, and other in-kind subsidies to be valued? The issue has received considerable attention in economics literature but is not settled. Obviously, benefits that come closest to simply replacing what recipients would in any case have spent their money on can be treated with less distortion as cash equivalents. For this reason, Food Stamps can be more legitimately treated at face value than Medicaid, since food subsidies, studies show, more closely replace ex-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

penditures that the recipient would have made without the subsidy. It is interesting to note that medical transfers constitute over 80 percent of the total market value of housing, food, and medical in-kind transfers. Therefore, even the $7,750 welfare figure cited in (7) above is a bloated estimate compared to a private cash income of $7,750.

III: Growth Rates & Incentives

(11) GILDER AND HOBBS ASSERT that, in the 1970s, welfare grew two and a half times as fast as GNP. Another falsity.

They adopt a simple growth rate, which ignores compounding. As a result their growth rate is not only exaggerated but capricious, because it can take on a whole range of values by either increasing or decreasing the time horizon over which it is measured, even while the actual rate of growth does not change.

A preferable method is the "exponential growth rate," which figures growth instantaneously, thus eliminating the problem of time horizons. With this method, the growth rate of welfare would not be nearly as meteoric as Gilder maintains. Indeed, while all welfare expenditures were about 8 percent of GNP in 1971, and 11 percent in 1976, this latter percentage has generally remained stable or even declined, something Gilder does not acknowledge.

(12) The distortion in growth rates above is a minor gaffe compared to the fact that Gilder both ignores and wrongly assesses the impact of inflation and of certain economic trends and demographic changes. While expenditures for social programs nearly doubled in *real* terms during the 1970s, the eligible population grew as well. Moreover, it is not true that all component parts of the welfare package kept pace with inflation.

For example, the average AFDC benefit *declined* 19 percent in real terms between 1969 and 1979, according to a study by Richard Kasten and John Todd. This trend has continued into the 1980s. While the introduction of Food Stamp programs, which are indexed to food prices, helped to mitigate the decline of AFDC benefits in many states, the average AFDC plus Food Stamp benefit declined 9 percent between 1974 and 1979. And while other benefits—Medicaid, housing assistance, and energy assistance—held their own or increased over the period, the increase was not sufficient to compensate for the decline in AFDC payments. Perhaps this is why Gilder prefers to make no citation for his false claim that "welfare recipients in most states kept up with inflation or improved their position through the tripling of food stamps and other in-kind supports" during the 1970s.

Gilder leaves one perplexed, therefore, about exactly how welfare programs were "extended beyond their mandate" during a decade of declining benefits. In order to comprehend the reason for an increase in the numbers on the welfare roles, one has to look toward overall economic conditions and demographic changes rather than toward public spending.

Consider economic factors. Kasten and Todd estimate that, based solely on increased unemployment and slower wage growth, the poverty rate in 1979 would have been 2.4 percent higher than in 1969.

Yet the poverty rate for all persons *decreased* from 12.1 percent to 11.6 percent over the course of the decade. Much of this was the result of the impressive inroads made on poverty among the elderly. But poverty was also reduced among blacks, persons in female-headed households, and in households of unrelated individuals over the age of 18. Despite the fact that economic conditions would have pointed in the direction of increased poverty, *welfare programs—even in the face of declining average benefits—helped to alleviate it.*

"The crucial goal [of a welfare program]," says Gilder, "should be to restrict the system as much as possible, by making it unattractive and even a bit demeaning." He then manufactures an attractive, even luxurious picture of the present welfare system that satisfies the need of radical conservatives for a rationale to make deep cuts in AFDC, Medicaid, Social Security, and other social programs.

But on examination, the rationale collapses when one examines Gilder's empirical props. Welfare benefits of the family of four (which is not the "typical" welfare family) were less than $7,750 in 1976, not $15,000; they are far less than what the average comparable, nonwelfare household has, not more; they have barely held their own or declined over the past ten years—not increased.

Rather than welfare programs, it is poverty that is demeaning. But for Gilder, poverty is a necessity. "In order to succeed," says Gilder, "the poor need most of all the spur of their poverty." The philosophy of "rugged individualism" notwithstanding, the factual evidence shows that welfare programs have helped the poor, and not robbed them of their spurs. And as anyone who bothers to visit a welfare family can attest, their lives are neither attractive nor more luxurious than the lives of working families. Gilder, of course, would not let something as empirical as an on-site visit interfere with his ideological arithmetic. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Silvia Pedraza-Bailey

Cuba: Reflections on a Revolution

Silvia Pedraza-Bailey, a native of Cuba who emigrated with her family in 1960, teaches sociology at Washington University in St. Louis. She has returned to Cuba twice in the last few years to do research for her study on Cuban (and Mexican) immigration to the United States. TAREK HAMADA, *a student, is pursuing a career in journalism. This interview is reprinted, with permission, from the Fall 1982 issue of the* Washington University Magazine, *copyright © 1982 by Washington University.*

TAREK HAMADA: From your experience in Cuba, your interviews with refugees, and your research, how would you assess the mood in Cuba today?

SILVIA PEDRAZA-BAILEY: For my research on policy changes regarding the Cuban exodus, I recently read through more than 20 years of *Granma*, the official Communist party newspaper. Reading it, I underwent an emotional transition that I imagine is very close to what my people in Cuba experienced, but very gradually. In the early years there was a sense that a new society was being built, and every action contributed, as Castro said, "another step on the road of building communism in Cuba." Even the scarcity Cubans lived with had merit. For example, in 1961 Cuba ran out of paper. Writing letters, drawing a sketch, taking one's photograph for posterity were nearly impossible. Raul Castro told the people: "We have run out of wood, but we are planting trees today: we are planting a new seed that [we] will someday reap." This was a symbol that the revolution was just beginning and it would bear fruit in the future. But there is still no paper in Cuba. . . . For most Cubans now, there is an enormous credibility gap between the things promised and delivered. Certainly, for the Mariel refugees and many more in Cuba, these were false promises.

HAMADA: Some people argue that the 1980 exodus was partly caused by the more than 100,000 exiles, who returned home [on visits], saying, Look at everything that we have.

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: The Mariel refugees have also told me that the return visits helped to release the exodus; not because their relatives returned with stories of achievements, but because they looked like they had decent lives. After 20 years, many relationships that had fallen out of use were re-established, and those in Cuba could ask, "If I come, will you help me get on my feet?" But the incentive to leave was not just economic. I have a good friend from Mariel, who now drives a second-hand car and holds a modest job cleaning while attending night school. Whenever we speak, she always stresses that what matters most to her is the freedom. In Cuba, her life was completely controlled, and she was imprisoned for writing "Down with Fidel" on the walls.

HAMADA: What have the recent immigrants told you about the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: In many ways, the history of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution [CDRs] is a microcosm of the history of the revolution. In the beginning, counterrevolution was widespread, the exodus was a flood. The committees were initiated by the end of 1960 for surveillance. Raul Castro told them, "You are supposed to keep an eye on everybody and a hand ready to grab them by the neck." That task they fulfilled. Since they are a block-by-block organization, they know everyone who comes into your house, everyone who leaves, what time you arrive and depart. After the failure of the Bay of Pigs, both the exiles and the Cuban government saw the revolution as consolidated. The counterrevolution virtually

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ceased and the Cuban exiles got busy with the task of living in America. Then the CDRs took on more positive functions, and their block-by-block organization helped to spread the public health services. Cuba wiped out tuberculosis in record time by delivering the vaccines through the CDRs, who made sure every child on the block was inoculated. But now they have returned to their function of surveillance. Since the 1980 exodus, Cuba is back to what it was in the beginning: a country with enormous discontent and dissent, a pervasive bitterness that is palpable on the streets. Once again, you have to declare yourself. For example, after the Mariel exodus, those who stayed staged a massive march of support.

HAMADA: Were they really sincere?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: Sincerity is very difficult to assess in a society where there is enormous control. Clearly there are people in Cuba who strongly believe in the revolution. They have given it everything they have to give . . . expecting Castro to deliver them from a terrible past to a better future—someday. A second category is made up of people who are opportunistic, who jumped on the bandwagon . . . as in every society. . . . But there is also a third category, which is what makes living in a society like Cuba different: people who may not be for it, but who do not have the choice of staying out of it. In Cuba, you participate or you become suspect. And they ostracize and jail the suspect. Therefore, many people engage in dissimulation. They live one life in public and another life in private. And to that life they admit very few people, because it is a big risk.

I will give you an example. When I went to Cuba, I visited the family of my friend from the Mariel exodus. She gave me some small things to take to her family: chewing gum, hair clips for the girls. I wanted not only to let her family know that she was well, always remembering them, but also to allow myself to see what life was like for decent, working-class people. Of course, I visited my family, but they still are the middle class. When my friend's brother, a construction worker, came for me at the hotel, he phoned me from the lobby, greeting me with "compañera." That is what everyone calls everyone else in Cuba. It signifies: We are with the revolution. Then we sat on a bench, just outside the hotel, alone, with no one near. I asked him a great deal: he told me details about Cuba I had never heard before. At one point, he pulled out a book, like a passport, an identification book: with his name, photograph, a number, addresses at home and work. "Everyone has one of these," he said. "You see this number. That number is a file. And in that file they have your life. They know where you are, where you work, where you live. Each of us has a complete file.". . .

HAMADA: What produced Cuba as it is today?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: Our legacy. Like most of the Third World, we in the Caribbean come from societies produced by colonialism, by the enormous intervention of the foreign powers, whether British, French, or American, in both the economy and the polity. We come from plantation societies that produced racism and inequality among races; we know the constancy of poverty and overpopulation. In *The Middle Passage*, V. S. Naipaul concludes that these accumulated pressures had left the area with an enormous tendency toward authoritarianism, because the leaders who emerge tend to be authoritarian—even if they say, "We will break with this past and create a different future." Our legacy saddled us with a tendency toward authoritarianism, of the left and the right, both of which are equally evil to my mind. Cuba claimed that if we rid ourselves of capitalism and American intervention and built a communist society—poverty, privilege, and racism would disappear. But the answers Cuba devised to our problems have not solved them either. When having a new car depends on being a party member, and having a television set on being in the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution, that is in no sense being equal. Nor is it being free.

HAMADA: What do you think about the claim that life is better now than under Batista? For example, women are not cheapened through prostitution?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: The revolution has done some good things, and I do not wish to deny either the good or the harm. The eradication of prostitution and vice, the spread of the educational and health services all over the country: those are very good. In a society, however, where people's lives are completely controlled, people feel that is good, but it is not enough. Is it better than the years of Batista? Batista was horrible: corruption and repression marked his regime. Those are the roots of the revolution. There wasn't a Cuban left in Cuba at the beginning of the revolution who was not against all that and for the revolution. However, there are now 23 years of something else. To my mind, the best analogy is a woman whose first husband was a wife-beater. The second husband is sweet, treats her well, brings her flowers. It just so happens that he is an alcoholic and cannot hold a job. For some years, she says to herself, "It's too bad that he has passed out once again, and this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other job hasn't worked out, but he is kind to me and never beats me." That lasts a while. But after a number of years, she begins to say, "Hell, this one is an alcoholic." At some point, the legitimation that no matter how bad this is, it is better than what used to be runs out on people. It *has* run out on a lot of people.

HAMADA: Did you feel people were trying to convey something to you because you were Cuban?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: Working-class people were constantly trying to deliver a message. When I ordered a sandwich, the waiter told me that he could only bring crackers and cheese, for a sandwich you needed a party card; when I climbed in a taxi . . . , the driver told me that he could not drive as far as I wanted because he had a very ancient battery and the only new cars Cuba imported had all gone to the party. One man, a former bus driver, was very explicit. "I used to drive a bus," he said. "On my route was the big store they built for the foreigners. So when the exiles returned, they would ask me to let them off at that store. As soon as we were near it, I would tell them, 'Look at what the revolution has done: that store is for you and for the party, but the rest of us can't buy there. But it's very good for you. This is what the revolution has done.' "

HAMADA: Don't people participate in People's Power? That is what Martha Hanneker argues in *Cuba: Dictatorship or Democracy*.

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: It depends on what we think of as participation. My favorite analogy is to our universities. We have a myriad little committees—some to welcome students, others to bid them farewell—in which we all participate, but none of them touch the essentials of the university. In Cuba, people participate in lots of these little committees that decide things whose outcome no one cares about. In so doing, they legitimate the fact that only a few people make all the critical decisions. Hence, it is not that people are not sincere. . . . In sincerity they decide where to build a restaurant. But people do not participate in anything whose outcome is critical, because those decisions don't go outside of the party. Moreover, the Central Committee controls the party, and Fidel Castro controls the Central Committee. All the new institutions created in the last decade have not changed that hierarchy of control.

HAMADA: What about racial discrimination? The place of women? Have things changed much?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: One of the big draws of the revolution came at the outset when they rightfully eradicated the blatant forms of discrimination that had existed in Cuba. Before the revolution, blacks were not allowed access to the restaurants and hotels in Havana, to the social clubs of the elite. The revolution did away with those forms of discrimination promising a society of perfect equality between blacks and whites. Certainly the position of blacks today is better than it was, but it is not perfect. Overt discrimination ended; racial prejudice did not. In attitudes, not a great deal of change has taken place. I . . . think the key lies in the difference between social movements and government policy. Women are also an example. In Cuba, there have been vast changes in the participation of women in society, but the double standard persists in the sexual ethic, and sexism (although affectionate) pervades the way men treat women. The revolution eradicated what could be eradicated by law, by social policy. But . . . attitudes do not disappear by fiat. . . . That's what a social movement will do, because in a social movement people work not only on changing society but also on changing themselves. . . .

HAMADA: What about education?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: Considering the meager old public education system in which for the most part the elite attended private schools and the rest were left with few public schools, Cuba's expansion of the public-school sector is downright impressive. Even poor people in remote rural areas have access to a free education and, ultimately, they can study at the University in Havana. The schools . . . are adequate and decent. The spread, linkages among levels, the opportunity: that is fine. What disturbed me came . . . when I asked to see the children's textbooks. They lent me a history book. On the first page I found Lenin and the October Revolution. As a Cuban, I feel deeply offended to think my history begins with Lenin and the October Revolution. It does not. It begins with the War of Independence and its heroes, José Martí and Antonio Maceo.

HAMADA: Martí is often used as a symbol in Cuba. Is it not a two-edged sword to use José Martí?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: José Martí is, in one person, Lincoln, Washington, and Jefferson: emancipator, fighter, philosopher, thinker. They use José Martí as a symbol not only in Cuba; the Cuban community in the United States also incorporates his writings in everything that they do. I wondered how it was possible to use one person on both sides. Recently, I have come to understand the two sides of Martí's thought. He thought that Cuba had to achieve two essential things: one, to free itself from the colonial domination of the United States and of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American forms of both political and economic intervention . . . ; the other, to achieve the development of republic, constitution, democracy, and eradication of racial discrimination. . . . Both sides use Martí, but each focuses on only one side of his legacy. Cuba emphasizes his desire to end American colonial domination; Cubans in this country stress his emphasis on democracy and republic. . . .

HAMADA: Speaking of heroes, Castro has always presented himself as a charismatic deliverer of Cuba. What does that tell you about the politics of charisma?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: Charisma signifies the "gift of grace," the special personal powers a leader has that enable him to move people and carry them with him, so much so that they may not notice what is happening. That happened in Cuba. A young man in the military told me, "They began with the prostitutes." They said prostitution is evil, a crime; therefore, let us round up the prostitutes to rehabilitate them. Of course, no one was opposed. They began with categories of people whose passing no one objected to: the detested big landowners, corrupt officials. But in the process they established that it was okay to collect some people, . . . morally sound or tainted, that the path to rehabilitation goes through a prison. When they arrived at the little man, he realized that social control was also about him, but by then it was too late.

The French movie *Mr. Klein* makes that point. In France, during the Nazi occupation, there is a non-Jewish Mr. Klein who realizes that, in persecuting a Jewish Mr. Klein, the Nazis threaten him too. Finding traces of the Jewish Mr. Klein, who was selling his belongings to go into exile, he repeatedly explains to everyone, "But I am not that Mr. Klein. . . ." At the end, he is on a train to Auschwitz, still explaining he is not *that* Mr. Klein. Most of us are like that. When they are after the Jews, we insist, "But that's about the Jews, not about me." At some point it stops being about the Jews, and starts being about you also. But then they have consolidated control; it is too late. Charisma helps enormously in getting from the beginning to that point. Yet charisma alone does not achieve control. In Cuba, very early on, the old jury system was destroyed, the press shut down, social protest abolished, and collective bargaining ended when trade unions became only transmission belts for the party.

HAMADA: Cuba's achievements, it is said, lie in health and education. Is the health system good?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: Yes, people have access to good, free health care. If a minor problem ails them, they go to a polyclinic; if the problem is bigger, to a small hospital in the nearest city; if it is serious, they are sent to Havana. Thanks to the thoroughness of inoculation campaigns, such diseases as tuberculosis and polio have disappeared. That is real. But I would not want that if it means the absence of liberty and dissent, which are also real. All societies should provide good health care for their citizens. In the United States, we have a long way to go to achieve social democracy. But one cannot substitute just health and education; one cannot say *this* is democracy when one cannot speak freely, participate while one's privacy is respected, lead a life without scrutiny, or become a member of an opposition that has a voice.

HAMADA: Are there lessons to be learned from Cuba?

PEDRAZA-BAILEY: Several different lessons:

- For American foreign-policy makers, the futility of economic coercion. The embargo did not hurt the Cuban government; it practically starved the Cuban people. In addition, the Cuban government derived much legitimacy from it, insisting that all their problems—with consumption and distribution, food, housing, poverty—were products of the embargo. When, in 1979, Raul Castro announced, "We cannot keep blaming the embargo for everything, as we have so often done in the past," he underscored its usefulness. Moreover, if sometime in the last two decades there were chances for the United States to have acted to promote a liberalization in Cuba, those opportunities were missed. Diplomatic solutions would have been better.
- For young Americans, the end to that romance woven around Cuba. For many, the Cuban revolution served as a repository of anti-American-government feeling. That was very easy to do, because much damage was done to my generation: the Vietnam war, Watergate, a succession of events that resulted in a serious erosion of public trust and public feeling. For many, that haze became focused on Cuba—Cuba as a wonderful thing. But Cuba is not, I am sorry.
- For Cubans, both in the United States and in Cuba, a reevaluation of goals. To continue my analogy, after two bad marriages, to authoritarianism of the right and authoritarianism of the left, perhaps we can have another chance to grasp for a good marriage. A century ago, Martí explained its essence: the end of colonial domination, the consolidation of democracy and republic, and the eradication of racism and discrimination. Until, as Cubans, we learn the importance of this balance, we will continue to sweat our fevers, as Martí wrote. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gus Tyler

The Radical Myth-Makers

THE RADICAL PERSUASION (1890–1917): ASPECTS OF THE INTELLECTUAL HISTORY AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THREE AMERICAN RADICAL ORGANIZATIONS, by Aileen S. Kraditor. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press. 381 pp. $37.50 cloth, $12.95 paper.

American radicals have lived with and by a mischievous mythology built around the proletariat, the system, and the vanguard. That is the essence of a complex, convoluted, and clever book by Aileen S. Kraditor, professor emerita of history at Boston University. Her evidence is drawn from the speeches and statements of radicals associated with the Socialist Labor party, the Socialist party, and the Industrial Workers of the World in the years 1890–1917. Although the author is a historian, the book is not a history: it refers to itself as "the Historiography of Three American Radical Organizations." Kraditor uses this investigation into the "methods and principles of writing history" (a definition of historiography) to debunk the many myths spread by her fellow historians of leftist persuasion who shared the mythology of the turn-of-the-century radicals.

Kraditor goes at her self-designated assignment with passion, the kind that can only be summoned up by someone who once shared the mythology (which she says she did) but no longer does. The author is not angry with the self-anointed saviors of yesteryear; she understands them; she even feels a quasi-sadness for these ineffectual angels with their inability or unwillingness to relate to the reality she calls "John Q. Worker."

The author does not stretch her conclusions to include all radicals. She grants that there were many in prominent posts, especially in the Socialist party, who were realists, with a pragmatic grasp of John Q. Worker and the society as a whole. She directs her fire at "the mythicists" who dominated the radical movement of that day and, one suspects, of later days when the Communists dominated American radicalism.

Because the book focuses on a time period (1890–1917), it is not altogether clear whether the radical's romantic view of proletariat, system, and self is to be seen as a chronic condition of the would-be revolutionary or just an aberration of an era that the author repeatedly refers to as the "shake-up period." The confusion is compounded by repeated comments on the gap between the radicals, depicted as predominantly American, and the workers, perceived as predominantly immigrant. Early in the book, Kraditor suggests that immigrants shunned the radical movement because they could find security (the author's word is "predictability") in the immigrant community that enjoyed "social space" in America's pluralist society. Later, she suggests the radicals "were, in an ironic sense, more closely tied to the conventional American world view than was John Q. Worker (usually a recent immigrant) who often did not even know what the conventional world view of Americans was, and who rarely joined the Americans' ideological debates." If I understand what the author is trying to say (and it isn't always easy), the gap between radical and worker is not simply that between "leader" and "led" but between American and "immigrant."

How accurate is this description? The first Socialist elected to the U.S. Congress was Meyer London, a Jew representing a Lower East Side district in New York that was overwhelmingly Jewish. The second Socialist congressman was Victor Berger from the predominantly German city of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Milwaukee. Both were elected by "immigrants." In the World War I years, New Yorkers elected five Socialists to the state legislature—Abraham Shiplacoff, William Feigenbaum, Charles Solomon, Sam Orr, and Louis Waldman—all from Jewish districts. The Farmer-Labor party of Minnesota, a major party in that state, was rooted in the socialist sentiments of Scandinavian immigrants. In the fierce war between the Socialists and the Communists that started at the end of the period covered by Kraditor, the decisive forces were the language federations within the old SP. Indeed, when the American Socialist party refused to support its government in the First World War, it was not uncommon to charge that it did so because the party was based on "foreign" (immigrant) elements.

The notion that the radical movements of the "shake-up" period were eschewed by immigrants is an invention, really an unnecessary one, to prove that the revolutionary vanguard could never reach the masses, because they spoke different languages—literally. My guess is that if Kraditor had read the foreign-language press of that time—German, Italian, Jewish, Finnish, Russian, Polish, Hungarian—she would have concluded that these "immigrants" were just as deeply into the class struggle, into the theories of Marx and Bakunin, Kropotkin and Hegel as a good American like the Wobblies' Bill Haywood. (Indeed, the two most prominent leaders of the Socialist party were Morris Hillquit, an immigrant Jew, and Eugene Victor Debs, whose parents were Alsatian immigrants. The leader of the Socialist Labor party was Daniel DeLeon, born in Curaçao of Sephardic Jewish parentage.)

KRADITOR'S DETOUR into the gap between American radical leaders and immigrant masses is quite unnecessary if her real point is the "mythicist" trait in America's revolutionary vanguard. So let's turn to the real question: were the perceptions of proletariat, system, and vanguard really myths and, if so, what kind of myths?

• Is the proletariat a myth? Probably no more so than any concept—as distinct from the concrete. Is "mankind," or "male macho," or "feminine mystique," or "love," or a "nation," or "mankind" a myth? We know that each of these things is, in some sense, real; but we also know that not one of these things has an existence outside of the mind. All these abstractions are cranial artifacts and hence can be tagged as myths.

This is, of course, the crux of an ancient philosophic dispute. To Plato, the abstraction—the idea—is the only true reality; the tangible and transient are mere shadows. Gertrude Stein was a pure Platonist when she wrote that a rose is a rose is a rose. In the three-dimensional world of the five senses, there are only individual specimens (no species)—some white, some yellow, some odorless, some stinky. And yet, a rose, called by any other name, is still a rose.

Likewise, the proletariat is the proletariat is the proletariat, although some of its members are white, some yellow, and some stinky. While no worker is the Platonic perfection of the proletarian idea (ideal?), a worker is nevertheless (like our rose) a proletarian and has been acting as such for a couple of hundred years.

The proletariat is a social fact: it is that body of people in a market (capitalist) economy who do not own their means of production and who, therefore, sell their talents for wages and salaries to earn their daily bread. This economic class, like every other class in history (consult James Madison, "Federalist Paper No. 10"), engages in efforts to promote its perceived interests. In pursuit of these objectives, this class has, in the last two centuries, profoundly influenced the course of history and the contours of societies almost everywhere on the face of the planet.

Most of the actors—the John Q. Workers—in the grand drama were unaware that they were acting out "proletarian" roles. Surely, the dozen or so "Polonians" (Poles), who went on strike in colonial Virginia in 1619 to win the right to participate as full citizens in the commonwealth assembly (mentioned by Captain John Smith in his diary), were not aware that they were "proletarians," but used the most ancient "proletarian" weapon to voice a typically "proletarian" demand. They, like most workers, acted out of personal pride or pain—particularistic, petty, parochial. But when all the separate acts of John Q., Suzy Q., Joe Schmoe, and Jane Doe are added up, the total is far greater than the sum of the parts and these unlisted actors become an Everyman, a shaker and maker of history.

By applying "reductionist" logic—the whole is best understood by examining its separate parts—Kraditor loses sight of the forest for the trees. John Q. Worker obscures her vision of the "working class."

By my lights, the "proletariat" is not a myth any more than "the forest" is a myth, although neither of them has an existence per se outside the human head.

• Is the system a myth? No more so than "culture," a social force whose presence and power Kraditor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would not deny. Part of any "culture" is the economic "system" through which the tribe or nation expresses itself.

Capitalism is one such system. It is distinct from the slave system, the feudal system, or communism. In this system, as in all systems we know, there is a ruling class, consisting generally of the owners of the means of production, whether owned outright or indirectly through the state. This ruling class, in the economic sphere, reaches out for political power, whether by force, persuasion, or economic clout. And this class, like every other class, develops a philosophy, a *Weltanschauung*, rooted in the tenet that what is good for *it* is good for all. Indeed, if "capitalism" is not a "system," ours is the only culture ever that lacked a "system."

The radical's obsession with "the system," argues Kraditor, put the would-be revolutionary in a logically untenable position. The radical depicted the "system" as all-powerful, in control of press, pulpit, and the president. How then, asks Kraditor, could these radicals, with their assertions of capitalist omnipotence, challenge the system of which they themselves were a part?

To Marx, the answer was one word: dialectic. In the *Manifesto* he described how the "thesis" spawned its own "antithesis" as capitalism gave birth to its own "gravediggers." Even DeLeon, who insisted that "legislation favorable to labor is a fruit that can be strained through the loins of a capitalist Congress as little as a Kentucky stallion can be strained through the loins of a Texas coyote," believed that some day the working class would elect its own Congress, abolish the capitalist system, and adjourn *sine die*.

Such seeming illogic is really the most natural logic for anyone challenging the status quo—no matter how powerful. When Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence, he assailed a system, the tyranny of the British Crown whose multitudinous crimes are listed at length. Conclusion? Let's get rid of their George and put in our own George. The all-powerful Czars, the all-powerful Bourbons were assailed by revolutionaries precisely because they were all-powerful and because they presided over a system to perpetuate that power.

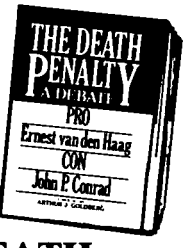
Kraditor makes the point that the radicals were confusing "system" with "society." Her definition of a "system" is "a social order in which the political, economic, and social spheres were tightly integrated and mutually consistent in their values." She argues that even in Europe there never was such a "system," and that the "term is even less appropriate to the United States." She prefers to think of "societies" rather than "systems."

Let's grant Kraditor's point that there really is no society where all the parts fit as neatly together as her definition of a "system" would necessitate. Let's agree that an economic system is only a subset of a larger culture, as is evident from the different ways in which the capitalist system expresses itself in the United States, Japan, and West Germany. The fact remains that capitalism is a "system" that determines the contours of the larger society profoundly, sometimes predominantly, even if never exclusively. And it is no myth that a radical change in the economic system will radically change the whole society, including its "political" and "social" spheres.

• Is the vanguard a myth? When the radicals saw their organizations as the think tank, the inspiration, the "leader" of the proletariat, were they on a flight of fantasy, perhaps powered by an ego kick?

This question gets to the essence of the relation between the radical and John Q. Worker. After all, if the three organizations that Kraditor discusses led nobody but themselves, they were nobody's vanguard.

Kraditor's query made me recall a brief conversation I had many years ago with Morris Hillquit who, according to Kraditor, "was totally immune to mythic visions." I was a teen-ager, asking



THE DEATH PENALTY: A DEBATE

***Pro:* Ernest van den Haag**
***Con:* John P. Conrad**
Foreword by Arthur J. Goldberg

"This book is must reading for all concerned, pro and con, with the death penalty."
—from the Foreword

"...an unusually engaging and informative volume....As a pair of self-styled gladiators, whose verbal swords and shields are deftly deployed, Conrad and van den Haag have made a striking contribution."
—Hugo Adam Bedau, *Editor of* The Death Penalty in America

318 pp., 1983 **$16.95**

Plenum PUBLISHING CORPORATION

233 Spring St.
New York, N.Y. 10013

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about the proper relations between the Socialist party and the "pure-and-simple" trade unions. "The Socialist movement," he explained to me in his precise and terse manner, "is the conscious expression of the unconscious strivings of the working class." I thought the matter over. Shortly thereafter I returned to the question: "If the workers are unconsciously striving for socialism, what need is there for a Socialist party?" He smiled indulgently: "Your body may want to go in a given direction, but to do so you will need eyes. And," he added with a twinkle, "you, my young comrade, have a good pair of eyes." I knew then that I was one of the anointed, of the "vanguard."

If Kraditor had been there, she would have been annoyed not simply by the double "myth" that there was a proletariat and that it was instinctively inching toward socialism but also, and above all, by the hubris behind the final "myth" that we—the comrades—were the "vanguard."

KRADITOR FINDS that this notion of the "vanguard" was based on two elitist premises: first, that the masses were asleep and that the radicals were their awakeners; second, that the movement was an army in which the radicals were the generals. Her evidence lies in the many stories in the radical press built around the "awakening," such as "China Waking from Age-Long Sleep," "Kansas Awakens," "Turkish Workers Awaken," and so on. Kraditor says that the use of the word—awaken—was more than a stylistic fad. "The English language is rich enough to have supplied these writers and orators" with language that did not assume that the masses were asleep. Her evidence about the movement being an army is derived from repeated reference to "class society" as "a state of war" with the "proletariat an army" and "the officer corps the S.P., the S.L.P., or I.W.W.," with "a strike a battlefield."

There can be little doubt that many radicals, perhaps most of them, felt it was their duty to "awaken" the masses. Indeed, there was (still is) a Yiddish socialist publication called "Der Wecker" (The Awakener). So what?

Would Kraditor have been happier if the radicals used a phrase such as "enlightenment" instead of "awakening"? After all, to "enlighten" means to let in the light—not vastly different from waking one up. Perhaps the word "educate" is more acceptable, although "educate" means "to lead out of" and to "lead toward." Would Kraditor insist that the Age of Enlightenment or The Great Awakening—both highly democratic concepts—were "elitist"?

If to enlighten, to educate, to awaken connote elitism, then all the men and women who have ever taken it upon themselves to open the eyes of others to the truth are elitists. All teachers, priests, authors, parents are guilty—if they are doing their job. So is Kraditor when she tries to make us aware of the truth about radicals: she is opening our eyes to something about which we were blind.

Likewise the military simile, while accurate, does not connote elitism. Movements have leaders; democratic movements have a special need for skillful leaders if the movement is not to fall into anarchy. Leaders are invested with authority by those who choose them—or tolerate them. This is true of Republicans, Democrats, Socialists, anarchists, faculty senates, little leagues, and corporations.

Because the class struggle does involve conflict, the movement requires a decision-making center, cadre, lines of communication, discipline, a hierarchy of command, strategies, tactics. Without a "vanguard," a mass becomes a blob.

It could be objected, of course, that this "vanguard" could not have been much of a "vanguard" since most workers never followed it into the promised land. But the fact is that for millions of workers in the United States, in a time of great awakening (oops), the radicals did provide a vanguard of superdedicated souls who roused and aroused, enlightened and enthused, moved and maneuvered millions of workers to transform their lives and the society around them. They cannot be judged by whether all the workers, or most of them, completed the long march to socialism. After all, Moses never had a chance to lead his people into the Promised Land; but he did take them a long way—out of slavery and toward the Commandments.

How far the "radicals" led the masses out of Egypt is not mathematically calculable. There were movements of working people that were not organized by radicals; they were "spontaneous." Other actions were inspired by radicals. But as a consequence of this coincidental, sometimes collaborative effort, working people moved from the 80-hour to the 40-hour week, from subsistence wages to a living wage, from being treated as hands to being treated as humans. Certainly, in the area of social legislation, the radicals made a major and definable contribution: their "immediate demands" were the backbone of the New Deal and of subsequent programs in the Fair Deal and New Frontier periods. In all these efforts, it would be nonhistorical to exclude the work of "reformers" who were definitely nonradical. But, in many cases,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the cooler heads in the establishment yielded to reform, not necessarily because they favored the step but because they feared "the revolution." The impossibilists made the possible possible by insisting on the impossible.

So when they thought of themselves as the "vanguard," they were not just prating pompously to puff up their ego. They were a "vanguard," challenging the "divine right" of the bourgeoisie in the Gilded Age.

ALTHOUGH THE CONCEPTS of proletariat, system, and vanguard are not myths, all three were adorned with the mystical figments of genuine mythology—at least in the eyes of later generations with 20-20 hindsight.

To the radicals of yesteryear (and to some of today) the proletariat was more than a class engaged in a struggle against another class. With the victory of the working class, racial and religious prejudice would end; women would win equality; worker would never turn against worker in national wars; democracy would be the exclusive and natural form of government. Some of the best radicals—Debs, Kate Richards O'Hare—looked upon the struggle for the rights of women and Negroes as diversionary and unnecessary. Kraditor provides plenty of passages (one of the real values of the book) to prove the point.

Sadly, time has corrected the notion of the Platonic proletariat. It, or parties acting in its name, can come to power and rule without democracy; it will take up arms against fellow proletarians; it can treat women dismally; it can indulge in racial, religious, ethnic prejudice.

Likewise the system. The radical of yesteryear saw public ownership replace private ownership of the means of production and exchange—one "system" pushing out another. Today no major Marxist party (socialist or communist) has any intention of wiping out all private enterprise. In the dialectic clash between capitalism and socialism, some kind of synthesis appears to be emanating from the interplay of "thesis" and "antithesis." We have not as yet found a name for the new "system," for the same reason that it is much more difficult to detect smog when you're in it than when you're several miles away.

The concept of "vanguard" has been repeatedly abused and misused by radicals in at least three recurrent ways. First, by the sectarians who believe that perfection of the program and purification of the party will establish a bright, shiny standard around which the masses will instinctively rally. Second, by the terrorists who believe that the "vanguard" can replace the mass by acts of individual violence. Third, by the totalitarians who try to convert the "vanguard" into a one-man party and who plan to seize power at the revolutionary moment to enthrone the "vanguard." What all these three have in common is their disdain for the view that the "vanguard" should awaken, enlighten, educate the mass so that—to use Marx's phrase—"the liberation of the working class" shall be "the task of the working class itself." The essential difference between the abusers and the users of the "vanguard" concept is that the former try to substitute it for the people while the latter try to elevate the people to its own level of thought and action.

In retrospect, it seems that while the concepts of proletariat, system, and vanguard have validity, they were often misapplied and, even more often, endowed with magical qualities—in the same way that religion, psychoanalysis, vegetarianism, megavitamins, or computers are endowed with such powers. We, with our perfect hindsight, know the limitations of these moving ideas, but we ought to be grateful that our radical forefathers did not know what we know—or think we know. For if they had known, they could never have worked the miracles they did.

Viewed pragmatically—as an organizer would do who has to motivate himself and his people—proletariat, system, and vanguard, even if they are "myths," are highly functional. They do for both leader and led what less imaginative and less inspiring "facts" cannot do.

Plato, in *The Republic*, showed a real understanding of how important such "myths" are in enabling humans ro rise to their highest potential. In trying to figure out how to prepare trustworthy guardians for the state (philosopher-kings), Socrates says: "How then may we devise one of those needful falsehoods—just one royal lie which may deceive the rulers, if that is possible, and at any rate the rest of the city?" Socrates then proceeds to invent such a "Phoenician tale," a useful truth to serve as an organizing principle for his desired society.

The radical vision of the proletariat may have been such a "needful falsehood," though not intentionally so, that saw the worker on a bigger-than-life scale, as Caliban with conscience and consciousness, as a superheroic figure, as the Savior. The radical saw, or depicted, the "system" as that "sorry scheme of things entire" that the proletariat "would smash and remold nearer to the heart's desire." Finally, the radicals saw themselves as persons obliged to lead, to set an example of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dedication, devotion, energy, self-sacrifice. Here was an intellectual energizer to "enthuse"—to put *theos* (Greek for God) *en* (into) the human spirit—an enthusiasm without which men and women may never claim that they were created in the image and likeness of their Maker.

Underlying all these useful "truths" there was, as all of us know who have spent a lifetime in the movement, still another truth: the inevitability of progress. Whether Marx (and the radical of the last 100 years) was inspired consciously by Darwin's theories of evolution or unconsciously by the messianism of the Hebrew prophets, faith in the future was so deeply accepted that it was rarely debated. In fact, that was the essence of "scientific socialism." It was not some utopian blueprint sprung from desire and dreams; it was a calculated conclusion based on the dynamics of a "system" that raised up a "proletariat" that would transform the social order.

Thanks to Hitler, Stalin, atomic weaponry, Freud, Niebuhr, and the discovery of indeterminacy, many of us have come to question the "inevitability of socialism," of Fabian gradualism, of progress, and even of continued existence. But for a movement on the march, in need of hope and forecasts of favorable issue, the notion that human beings are destined to ascend to a higher humanity is indispensable—a necessary functional figment.

In Kraditor's cosmogony, John Q. Worker is presented as "reality," as the counterpoint to the radical's mythology. John Q. is rooted in the earth while the revolutionary is lost in some cloud. But is Kraditor's notion of John Q. Worker not just another myth—a myth that like the radical's image of the proletariat is an equally romanticized version of John Q. Worker?

Are we to assume that, if the radicals had not tried to peddle their myths to workers, then John Q. and his brethren would have no myths in their heads? J. Q. W. would be a rare specimen indeed if this were so—quite inhuman. For humans are myth-making animals who invent a mythology and then live by it. Their heads are filled with myths heard in infancy from mother or wet nurse, from the boys or girls, from the pulpit or press, in school, on radio or TV, on the street, in the ethnic enclave, from the cognoscenti, from books, from their analyst, their bartender, the commercials—from fantasies that spring out of the dark recesses of their own being. In our heads a million myths are in ceaseless and endless warfare. To invent a John Q. Worker who is the embodiment of reality, as opposed to mythology, is to manufacture just another myth, isn't it? □

Emanuel Geltman

A Heroic Tale, Told Simply

CODE NAME "MARY": MEMOIRS OF AN AMERICAN WOMAN IN THE AUSTRIAN UNDERGROUND, by Muriel Gardiner. Foreword by Anna Freud. Illustrated. New Haven: Yale University Press. xiii+ 179 pp. $14.95.

> . . . she belonged to neither the hunters nor the hunted, the persecutors nor the persecuted. The ugly scenes which followed Hitler's triumphant entry into Austria need have been none of her concern.
> —*Anna Freud*

But they were Muriel Gardiner's concern, and they had to be, as this book makes clear. Written simply, without flourish or glitter, it is a record of how a privileged young American woman, in Vienna for psychoanalytic sessions with Dr. Ruth Mack Brunswick, witnessed the crushing of the Socialist Defense League by Dollfuss's fascist troops on February 12, 1934.

When still younger and a student in Italy, she had been horrified by Mussolini's march into Rome in 1922. In the U.S. she had joined in Sacco-Vanzetti protests, showed her concern with social issues as a member of the Wellesley (College) Forum, joined Harvard and Radcliffe students in organizing a student conference addressed by socialist and liberal leaders. Interest and compassion became conviction and commitment, at great risk, as Muriel Gardiner became "Mary" in Austria's underground socialist resistance. She stayed in Vienna beyond the Anschluss for as long as she dared to in order to complete her medical degree and to get the last false passport or American "affidavit" she could manage for fleeing comrades.

Surely the stuff of fiction. And one can hardly blame Lillian Hellman for using it in *her* autobiography, as appears to have been the case, changing "Mary" to "Julia." There have been news stories about what may have been a bit of Hellman's flummery. "Julia" turns up in Hellman's *Pentimento* and in the film of that name with Vanessa Redgrave and Jane Fonda. It could be that there was another "Julia," but if there was it strains credibility. Nothing in Thomas Hardy's notable

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

coincidences quite matches this unlikeliness. In the event, Muriel Gardiner checked with Dr. Herbert Steiner, director of the Documentation Archives of the Austrian Resistance, and he checked with former resistance fighters. No "Julia," just "Mary"—code name. For once life has a happier ending than invention: "Julia" loses a leg and dies; "Mary" lives, and continues a productive life that has included, in addition to private practice, work with New Jersey's Board of Health, a book on Freud's "Wolf Man," and an important book based on her work with juvenile prisoners, *The Deadly Innocents: Portraits of Children Who Kill.*

At that, fair or foul, one has to be grateful to Hellman. Muriel Gardiner had been contemplating an autobiography; *Pentimento* and "Julia" may have been the last little nudge to get on with it. What we have here is principally an account of her life, and antifascist activities, from February 1934 until she left Paris after the outbreak of World War II in 1939. There is also a brief survey of her life before and after "Mary."

HELEN MURIEL MORRIS (the name is put to special use late in the story) was the granddaughter of Nelson Morris who had come to the States as a Jewish 13-year-old in the mid-nineteenth century, made his way to Chicago with a dollar in his pocket, and eventually founded the large meat-packing firm of Morris & Company (later sold to Armour). Her maternal grandfather, Gustavus Swift, born in New England, had also made his way to Chicago as a near-penniless young man, and built the Swift meat-packing company. By the time the author was born in 1901, the family was wealthy.

Without making too much of it, Muriel Gardiner presents her awakening social conscience, which sometimes took the form of a kind of "primitive" rebellion—as when she gave away most of her clothes and jewelry. (Later, in Vienna, toward the end of the story, when discretion and caution are of the utmost importance, she allows herself a moment of impulsive protest. There was a form on which students had to record their religion for graduation from medical school—Christians on one line, Jews on another. Raised as a Protestant, Muriel Gardiner, by now "Mary," writes "Jewish" on her papers. This happens *after* the Anschluss, in the time of the Nazis. Yet, she is allowed to pass anyway.)

While growing up in America, she attends fine schools, travels abroad, aspires to be a writer, goes to Wellesley, engages in political discussion, is influenced by a few teachers. Then she goes to Oxford. Decides to go to Vienna (like "Julia"), hoping that Freud will take her as a patient, but he recommends Dr. Brunswick, who becomes her analyst and lifelong friend. She meets and marries Julian Gardiner, has a daughter, Connie, is divorced, retains her friendship with Gardiner. There is a brief intimacy with Stephen Spender, who becomes another lifelong friend. Why repeat? Scores of people pass through the book. A few she distrusted, even disliked, but it is amazing how many remain lifelong friends. It speaks for a certain quality of person and mind.

She had, in her earlier years, never intended to become a doctor; her object then was to be an educator and writer. However, she decided to take up medicine, planning to attend medical school in Vienna for two years, then to complete her medical education and internship in the U.S. But she had to stay on, and the why of it becomes the heart of the book.

NOW TO THE FOCUS of her life in Austria. After the workers' resistance had been smashed in 1934, the leaders of the Austrian Socialist party had to flee. Most of them went to Czechoslovakia and later, when the Nazis took over that country too, elsewhere. What remained was a dispersed underground, hidden and working in separate cells. She was approached by the head of one of these cells. False passports were required, and they could be gotten by sending couriers to Czechoslovakia, where exiled SP leader Otto Bauer and others would make arrangements. Later, socialists needed "affidavits"—documents presented to American consular officials that the person in question would be assured of support for five years in the U.S. by a responsible sponsor. Muriel Gardiner sponsored so many people that eventually U.S. officials balked; but then she was able to get her brother and American friends to fill *their* "quota" of affidavits. False passports, however, were more often the pressing need.

Passing back and forth over the border between Austria and Czechoslovakia entailed large risks. Yet very often, whenever intermediaries couldn't go, "Mary" made the trip herself. With her Gardiner passport "overstamped," so to speak, and too noticeable, she went to England, which permitted dual citizenship, and obtained a passport in her maiden name, Morris. And she sometimes lent her American or British passport to Austrians fleeing the country, retrieving it in Paris.

Enrolled in medical school, Muriel-"Mary" kept both an apartment to live in with her little daughter and a place where she could study, close to the school. This place had the unusual advantage for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Vienna that the concierge lived in the back, and so was unable to observe who entered the apartment. She also had a small place in the woods, which she had acquired shortly after coming to Vienna. In time, all of these places became "safe houses" for underground resisters. They stayed a day, a week, whatever was necessary. And Muriel's young daughter somehow quickly learned to accept the rules imposed by caution.

"Mary" had become a full-fledged member of the underground, meeting many of its members, especially "Wieser," an underground name of "Joe"—Joseph Buttinger. Complicity in underground work led to close association and, eventually, love. A few years later, marriage seemed a practical step. (And their marriage has continued for over 40 years here in the U.S.) They did, finally, have to get out of Austria, then, as war was approaching, out of France.

Joe "Wieser" is a central figure. It is indeed a good idea to read the record of the resistance in his book—Joseph Buttinger's *In The Twilight of Socialism,* a comprehensive account of the Austrian underground. "Joe" had been born into a peasant family as poor as Muriel's was rich. At a young age, after his father's death, he was put to work at near slave-labor conditions on another farm. In their early teen-age Joe and his brother found work at a glass factory, and a new world opened. He found his way to the socialist movement and its literature. At fifteen or so, he bought his first book, Engels's *Origins of the Family.* What reading and buying a book meant may be gauged by the fact that years later the Buttingers built a house in Manhattan primarily to accommodate a library planned for 100,000 volumes. It contained an extensive collection on Central Europe, later donated to an Austrian university, in Klagenfurt.

We are amazed at "Mary's" energy—looking after a household, studying medicine, and always filling the need to help someone. Joe matched her in activity, always walking the thin line of capture. Eventually, as the known socialist leadership had to flee, Joe became head of the underground.

ONCE IN THE U.S., both continued their activities, Muriel in psychiatry and social causes, Joe in work with and for refugees, through the International Rescue Committee. In more recent years, his visits to Vietnam led to his books, *The Smaller Dragon* and the two-volume *Vietnam: A Dragon Embattled,* and to a number of articles he published in *Dissent.*

A brief epilogue speaks of their life in the U.S. And while *Code Name "Mary"* quite properly confines this autobiography's scope, the reader who knows something about Muriel and Joe wishes there had been a little more. There was the time in '56, for instance, when Joe flew to Vienna at the outbreak of the Hungarian uprising, and took steps to bring help and rescue to the Hungarian freedom fighters. . . .

In 1972 Muriel Gardiner received a letter from Anna Freud that reads, in part:

> . . . I have received the *Philadelphia Bulletin* [*Bulletin of the Philadelphia Association for Psychoanalysis,* June 1972] with the articles. . . . I had not known of the intensity of your political activities in Vienna, only the vaguest rumors. . . . I like my own life very much, but if that had not been available and if I had to choose another one, I think it would have been yours. □

Carol O'Cleireacain

Of Human Tragedy & Economic Disaster

THE DEINDUSTRIALIZATION OF AMERICA, by Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison. New York: Basic Books. 323 pp. $19.95.

This book is about job loss, plant closings, and community decline, or what the authors call "widespread, systematic disinvestment in the nation's basic productive capacity." They describe the various forms such disinvestment takes, assess its impact, analyze the forces behind it, and examine policy options to confront the problem.

Most of us can recite the names of industrial giants that no longer exist, such as Youngstown Sheet and Tube or the Mahwah Ford plant. But what is particularly useful about this book is its systematic documentation of a huge number of plant closings that have not received widespread notice. The authors put the events within a historical context. The plant shutdowns indeed range across auto, steel, rubber, chemicals, timber, hand tools, machine tools, housewares, and textiles.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bluestone and Harrison cite studies indicating that plant closures lead to long-term unemployment for about one-third of the work force. This is consistent with evidence presented by Lou Ferman and others at the University of Michigan's Labor Relations Institute, indicating that even for the two-thirds who do find new employment, one-half become permanently located in inferior jobs at lower wages. Even three years later, many of these workers have not found jobs that pay as well as those they had before. The unemployment, the permanent losses in income and pension rights, as well as the depletion of savings, generate severe hardship for workers, their families, and their communities. Beyond the economic impact, the links to increased disease and stress-related mortality rates, increased suicide, homicide, admissions to mental hospitals, imprisonment, and alcoholism have been documented by Harvey Brenner and others. These economic and social costs represent a huge national loss.

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING? According to the authors, technological change, the increased centralization of capital, the emergence of conglomerates, tax write-offs for investment, and the social compact between capital and labor have all contributed to making increased capital mobility a necessary road for maintaining profits:

> During the boom years, U.S. economic expansion abroad generated enormous short-run profits, but in the course of doing this it helped establish excess (unused) productive capacity in one basic industry after another. Through their multinational subsidiaries and the profitable sales of patents and licenses to foreign enterprises, the leading American firms even helped to generate their future competition. . . . With no rational way to divide up the international market, U.S. firms found themselves subject to intense world competition and, as a consequence, shrinking profits. . . . [The] postwar series of labor victories that successfully constrained the flexibility of management by regulating the workplace and forcing the corporate sector to underwrite part of the costs of the "social safety net" . . . [also] contributed to the profit squeeze. . . . Management found that it could no longer afford the social contract and maintain its accustomed level of profit. . . . The solution was capital mobility. . . . The capital mobility option . . . has shifted the fulcrum of bargaining power in favor of capital to an unprecedented degree.

Some parts of this explanation ring truer than others. The flight of capital to anti- and nonunion environments does not seem to jibe with a very interesting table listing all the countries involved with producing Ford's "World Car." Almost all have unionized auto industries. This is not to say that Ford doesn't use the workers of one country against those of another—just that it certainly hasn't shrunk from investing and producing in highly unionized environments.

The weakest part of the book is the last section, called "The Great Reindustrialization Debate." In large part that is because it covers a different subject from the rest of the work. A recitation of the process of deindustrialization does not necessarily generate expertise on reindustrialization. Deindustrialization focuses on job deaths. Reindustrialization is about job births. The deaths must be weighed against the births. No one would argue that horseshoes should continue to be made forever. Some job deaths are inevitable. The problem for society comes when job deaths exceed births dramatically, as they do in a depression or when there are such large changes in the nature of jobs that workers displaced by job deaths do not meet the needs of the job births. It is clear that we are currently living through both a recession and a period of production shifts—from the industrial to what some have called the postindustrial society.

Over the past decade, the U.S. economy created enough new jobs to absorb a 25 percent increase in the labor force, even though the economy was only growing at three-quarters of the rate of the 1960s. At the same time, the European economies had no net job creation, and Japan only an 8 percent increase. These facts do not mean that we have enough job creation. We have had a creeping increase in structural unemployment. But we are doing better than Europe and Japan. However, the job-creation phenomenon is not the subject of *The Deindustrialization of America*. Its emphasis on job deaths, which the authors rightly lay at the door of capital mobility and the search for higher profits, leads to a series of defensive policy options. This is different from reindustrialization, which is a positive policy strategy.

WHAT IS THE AUTHORS' DEFENSE against this plague of job deaths? Rebuilding the social safety net; a greater social wage for labor; better job security; plant-closing legislation; better information and planning; and "economic democracy." All these, except perhaps the last, are policies with which the "good old FDR liberals" would have no problem. All would make the U.S. look much more like Europe—which simply reinforces the point that they are anti-deindustrialization, not reindustrialization, policies. But such a list hardly exhausts the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"defensive" policy options open to us. The authors do not mention some fundamentals: an appropriate mix of monetary and fiscal policy and an intelligent exchange-rate policy. It is almost as though their concentration on the structural aspects of the job issue has made them lose sight of the broader picture. Unfortunately, they are not alone in this oversight.

For example, deindustrialization and the balance of payments go together. The bulk of deindustrialization (excluding "horseshoes") is the substitution of foreign plants for domestic plants, foreign production for domestic production. Is there a way to help stop this process, a way that Bluestone and Harrison ignore? Yes. The U.S. could encourage the depreciation of the dollar. If we allowed monetary policy to expand enough, and if we reached agreements with the other major developed countries not to engage in competitive depreciation but rather to allow this looser monetary policy to be validated into a lower exchange rate for the dollar, then much of our international noncompetitiveness would disappear. UAW wage rates would not fall but would be worth less in yen, which would make producing in Japan less attractive than it has been. Changing the domestic/foreign price and cost relationship will change the impetus for deindustrialization.

I don't want to oversell a dollar depreciation. It is not a panacea. It is not likely, for example, to have a major impact on potential future trade, because it would tie all countries to the dollar—including many in Latin America and Asia that are more competitive for lucrative investment. And it may not be practical. Given the reserve role played by the dollar, changes in the U.S. exchange rate require consultation and coordination with other governments and central banks. Avoiding a competitive depreciation is an international political problem and that means, finally, negotiating the speed of deindustrialization. Unfortunately, past and present American administrations have rejected such a posture.

Such a monetary and exchange-rate policy is particularly well suited to the defensive strategy offered by Bluestone and Harrison. It would affect the competitiveness of existing production and trade, that is, it would help to prevent further job loss. In this sense it parallels such policies as prior notification of plant closings, improved unemployment compensation, and job retraining and adjustment assistance. But, much like Bluestone and Harrison's policy suggestions to eliminate tax subsidies for mergers and other unproductive investment and plant relocation, exchange-rate policy raises the issue of the distribution of power between capital and labor. What difference might it make to American economic policy if American workers, rather than middle- and high-income tourists and investors, were the ones conscious of what an appropriate exchange-rate policy could do for them? Consider the redistribution of income that would result. Consider the lessened need for "concession bargaining." Consider the strength labor would have in making the Federal Reserve Board more accountable to Congress and the public.

This review, concentrating on the issue of deindustrialization, plays to the book's strength. Industrial policy should combine policies aimed at job deaths, job births, and the life expectancy of jobs. Bluestone and Harrison's evidence on the economic and social costs of job deaths is compelling. Their interpretation is that "the pace of private capital mobility . . . has become unacceptably rapid; indeed, perhaps out of control . . . [causing] large numbers of workers, families, and communities . . . to have been seriously injured. . . ." That is correct. The policies the authors set forward to avoid some of this injury, to slow down the pace of private capital mobility and to compensate workers and their communities for the remaining costs have

The University
of Massachusetts Press

Class and Civil Society:
The Limits of Marxian
Critical Theory

Jean L. Cohen

This impressive analysis of Marxian class theory and discussion of neo-Marxian theories of class "provides a fresh and penetrating argument that is both a political critique of Marxism and a theoretical critique of Marx. . . . I would not be surprised if this tightly argued scholarly treatise became an important source for a post-Marxist Left in America and elsewhere" – Claus Offe, Department of Political Science and Sociology, University of Bielefeld. $22.50

Box 429 Amherst 01004

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been tried, with varying success, in other countries. Most important, they offer the realization that workers are not merely cogs in the game of international capital mobility.

Only when enough people accept that workers are an important resource, whose waste is a human tragedy and a national economic disaster, can we begin to address the political issues of reindustrialization. We can begin to ask, and to answer, how large America's basic industries will be, how many workers they will employ, where they will be located, where the capital will come from to ensure competitiveness, and what the return on that capital will be. But until we get there, controlling the pace of economic dislocation and minimizing its costs represents a first step toward an American industrial policy. □

Mitchell Cohen

(Un)Reason and Its Modern Adventures

THE DESTRUCTION OF REASON, by Georg Lukács. London: Merlin Press and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press. 865 pp. $27.50.

MARXISM AND MODERNISM: AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF LUKÁCS, BRECHT, BENJAMIN AND ADORNO, by Eugene Lunn. Berkeley: University of California Press. 331 pp. $29.95.

In 1949, a few years after his return to Budapest following a quarter of a century's exile, Georg Lukács found himself under vigorous attack by the press and the party hierarchs who accused him, among other things, of "revisionism" and "objectively" serving imperialism. That same year saw the publication of an article on "Goethe and the French Revolution" by his Rumanian-French disciple Lucien Goldmann, which argued against the prevalent view that the author of *Faust* was indifferent to politics in general and hostile to the French Revolution in particular. Restricted by his position at the court of Weimar, suggested Goldmann, Goethe was free only to criticize the revolution but not to articulate its positive aspects. Hence while his greatest writings were animated by "an integral liberty," his work in this period represented an "artistic checkmate."

Goethe scholars may choose to dispute these claims. However, it is evident that, intentionally or not, Goldmann's characterization could (at least partially) fit Lukács's career as well—although Lukács, while living in Stalin's Moscow of the 1930s and '40s, was restricted to *praising* the outcome of a revolution. More than that, however, he accommodated to and assimilated important elements of Stalinism. Although "the later Lukács" produced works of lasting value, his status as perhaps the greatest Marxist philosopher since Marx still rests on his 1923 masterpiece, *History and Class Consciousness*. In this volume of essays, the categories of classical German philosophy (particularly Hegel) were vigorously reinjected into a Marxism that, both in the East and the West, had become dominated by a crude positivism and a crude economic determinism.

In *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukács insisted that Marxism be defined not by blind adherence to the letter of the master's writings but by the spirit of his method. In contrast to the fetishization of "empirical facts" practiced by many Marxist and non-Marxist social scientists, Lukács emphasized the centrality of Marx's dialectical methodology and the need to place facts within the totality of social, political, and economic relations in order to render them comprehensible and meaningful. At the heart of the book was an essay on the "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat" that examined the process by which, under capitalism, the world of products of human labor comes to be regarded by its producers as a world of things and of relations among things beyond their control. Lukács thus emphasized human subjectivity and class consciousness, refocusing on the "superstructure" that Marxist dogmatists viewed as a mere reflection of society's economic "base."

Not surprisingly, *History and Class Consciousness* provoked the wrath of "orthodoxy" both in the Second and the Third International, for each had to maintain its own "objective truth." When he was faced with these attacks Lukács was a refugee in Vienna (he had been deputy commissar for public education in the short-lived Hungarian Soviet Republic and had fled in 1919, barely escaping Admiral Horthy's death sentence). Especially affected by attacks from within the Comintern, Lukács

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

retreated. He repudiated his book and in future years published numerous "self-criticisms."

While *History and Class Consciousness* had offered an uneasy balance between a utopian vision of the proletariat as the "identical subject-object of history" and Leninism, by the time of his arrival in Moscow Lukács was an advocate of a Popular Front strategy for the exiled Hungarian Communists. The defeat of his position in the party (by Béla Kun's supporters) coincided with his withdrawal from active politics. Henceforth Lukács devoted himself primarily to the study of literature and the history of philosophy. He wrote *The Young Hegel*, developed a theory of literary realism and, later, of aesthetics. As Michael Löwy notes in his insightful study, *Georg Lukács: From Romanticism to Bolshevism* (1979), Lukács engaged in "a consistent effort to 'reconcile' Stalinism with bourgeois-democratic culture." Lukács generally defended his fidelity to the Soviet regime on the grounds of the struggle against nazism. Yet even if he was so inclined, public criticism in the Russia of the purges was hardly feasible and his own survival in itself is something remarkable.

LUKÁCS'S MAMMOTH VOLUME *The Destruction of Reason* illustrates just how much of Stalinism he actually ingested. Theodor Adorno wryly remarked that the book revealed the destruction of Lukács's reason. It was first published in 1953, was finally translated into English and issued in Britain in 1980, and is now available in the U.S. Lukács wrote it while under attack by Matyas Rakosi's hatchet men in the late 1940s and early '50s. Although Lukács had written excellent literary and aesthetic studies only a few years earlier (such as *Goethe and His Age*), *The Destruction of Reason* shows one of the century's great minds at a low point.

Lukács aimed to reveal here "Germany's path to Hitler in the sphere of philosophy" as a reflection of Germany's "concrete development in general" and the class struggle in particular. Modern Germany became the site of irrationalist philosophy's most comprehensive development, he argues, because of its retarded and dislocated evolution, and especially that of its bourgeoisie. The great German battle between reason and unreason is the superstructural counterpart of the socioeconomic historical evolution to Hitler, and thus equally the battle between progress and reaction.

We see here an odd version of a famous Hegelian concept. Insisting that the world is proceeding on a path of continual rationalization, Hegel wrote of "the cunning of Reason," the process by which the grand march of reason attains its own historical ends through the unwitting, subjective passions of particular men. Hence Napoleon advanced the course of historical progress by breaking down Europe's *ancien régime*, but for the sake of his own grandeur, not for the birth of a more rational world. Lukács, however, portrayed the cunning of unreason. In his account virtually all of modern German thought apart from Hegel and Marxism (and a fairly stodgy Marxism at that) is composed of varieties of irrationalism, which, however unintentionally, do the intellectual spadework for the greatest embodiment of unreason: nazism.

And what does Lukács mean by irrationalism? First of all, and perhaps this is what allows him to use it as a catchall, he defines it negatively. Irrationalism, he argues, is not dialectical and not materialist, and it "became operative" by challenging such modes of thought. His positive definition combines Hegelian insight with crude materialism. With the premise that thought and its object are radically separate, Lukács tells us that irrationalism commences with "a discrepancy" between "intellectual reflection and the objective original." More simply, Lukács is arguing that "objective truth" is attained when the mind accurately reflects the world as it exists outside the mind. Confronted with apparently unresolvable problems in that world, irrationalists assume the problems to be unresolvable; thought breaks down before reality, which becomes "an area beyond reason. . . ." As a believer in the historical necessity of progress, Lukács contrasts this view of limits with the perspective of dialectical reason, which allows us to transcend the appearance of unresolvability and to grasp the totality behind it. Indeed, when we are lost, baffled by the surface of reality, we inevitably begin to question the possibility of progress, which is inextricably linked to the power of reason.

While *The Destruction of Reason* is not without insights, it is its animating impulse that is objectionable. Undoubtedly, many of the currents of thought that Lukács analyzes are appropriately characterized as irrationalist. Undoubtedly, there are very important contiguities between nazism and earlier forms of German thought and nationalism. However, to claim that they were all—except for Hegel and Marxism—road signs to the Third Reich is not just an absurdly sweeping generalization but a remarkable example of backward tunnel vision. In the end, it is only because Lukács begins his teleology of unreason with a simplistic Manichaeism that he can maneuver diverse types of thinking into the service of his thesis.

Lukács divides the era of modern German irrationalism into two broad periods. The first, which closes circa 1871, corresponds to the rise of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bourgeoisie. In this first period, Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Kierkegaard battle Hegel and idealist dialectics on behalf of varying claims for intuitionism, the absurdity of history, and the need for faith. The second period, which corresponds to the age of imperialism, is marked by the rise of proletarian movements and such events as the Paris Commune. In this second period irrationalism wages war against dialectical materialism. In Nietzsche, Lukács finds "the imperialist myth designed to counter socialist humanism," a morality for the ruling class in a time of decay, a call for unleashing bourgeois egoism. In contrast to those postwar scholars who sought to save Nietzsche's writings from the Third Reich's misuse of them, Lukács insists that there is a fundamental kinship between the spirit of Hitler and that of Nietzsche.

The dominant ideology of that second period of German irrationalism—the imperialist era—however, was "vitalism" (*Lebensphilosophie*), which promoted, according to Lukács, a blind faith in intuition as well as radical doubt in the possibility of objective knowledge. After analyzing Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Simmel, Martin Heidegger, and Karl Jaspers, Lukács turns to the evolution of 19th-century German sociology and finally to race theory itself. "It is a steep descent," he concludes, "from Schelling and Schopenhauer—via Nietzsche, Dilthey, Spengler, etc.—to Hitler and Rosenberg. But in its very steepness, it sufficiently expresses the character of irrationalism and the necessity of its development."

Steep indeed. The development as Lukács describes it is only possible because of his preconception of Reason as One and Unreason as One. So reason, he argues, takes form in dialectical materialism; unreason becomes nazism. Germany's defeat is the historical event of the defeat of unreason by reason—and here by reason Lukács meant Stalin's Russia!

LUKÁC'S PRESENTATION INVITES COMPARISON with the work of the Frankfurt School. In a 1941 article entitled "The End of Reason," Max Horkheimer asserted that fascism was "reason revealing itself as unreason." He pursued this line of thought in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* (coauthored with Theodor Adorno at the end of World War II), which argued—in direct contrast to Lukács's Enlightenment-Marxist faith in progress—that totalitarianism represented the dialectical outcome of the Enlightenment tradition itself. Recognizing that human and technological progress are neither identical nor necessarily connected, Horkheimer and Adorno warned that idealizing humanity's domination of nature, and thereby canonizing the methods of natural science as the ultimate tools of all knowledge, helps insure the domination of human beings by each other. Because of its infatuation with manipulative rationality, the Enlightenment makes computation and utility the measure of all things. Thus, argued Horkheimer and Adorno, our world of differences and varying human qualities and realities is reduced to interchangeable quantities: "On the road to modern science, men renounce any claim to meaning. They substitute formula for concept, rule and probability for cause and motive." Enlightenment, they concluded, "behaves toward things as a dictator toward men. He knows them insofar as he can manipulate them." As 20th-century "administered" monopoly capitalism replaced the liberal, competitive capitalism of the 19th century, this process attained its most acute form in fascism.

Nazism raised the most troubling questions about Western civilization for Horkheimer and Adorno in a way it did not for Lukács. This brings us to what is perhaps the most vulnerable aspect of Lukács's analysis and assumptions. *The Destruction of Reason* gives us the underside of what its author takes to be a linear, necessary march of historical progress that leads to the ultimate victory of reason, while his teleology of unreason makes Hitler's epoch—humanity's greatest catastrophe—merely a warp on that inevitable path.

Themes parallel to those of *The Destruction of Reason* appeared in Lukács's literary and aesthetic writings, especially as they pertained to modernism. His 1934 essay, "Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline," asserted that expressionism, despite the contrary intent of its practitioners, possessed numerous features that "fascist literary theory could accept without having to force them into its mold." Both, wrote Lukács, were rooted in irrationalism. In fact, his perspective represented but one of the varying Marxist responses to modernism in art and literature that emerged at the time.

AS EUGENE LUNN WRITES in his fine historical study of Lukács, Bertolt Brecht, Walter Benjamin, and Theodor Adorno, *Marxism and Modernism*, it was through its confrontation with modernism that "a serious and flexible Marxist aesthetics for the twentieth century" developed. Inasmuch as modernism entailed what Irving Howe calls "an unyielding rage against the official order"—specifically against established literary and artistic styles—it would seem something appealing to, if not serviceable for, Marxists. However, inasmuch as modernism was composed of a plethora of revolts literary or stylistic paradigms in general? And what

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that were often at odds with each other and did not create their own norm per se, it was alien to the spirit and style of what by the early 20th century had become "orthodox" Marxism (particularly in the Second International).

As Lunn points out, to the extent that modernism's diversity had unifying themes—aesthetic self-consciousness, temporal simultaneity, paradox and uncertainty, demise of the integrated human subject—they were at odds with faith in a linear development of human history toward an inevitable goal brought forth by the class struggle and a corresponding belief that literature and art ought to reflect "realistically" that evolution and struggle.

Lunn's *Marxism and Modernism* is especially successful in placing these issues within their historical context, thus helping to explain why one diverse group of Marxists at a given historical moment found relevant what at another time was shunned. Lunn ties the rise of modernism to the demise of the promise of liberalism, particularly in the late 19th century. A decline in optimism, a loss of faith in progress, fear for the fate of the individual in the era of the masses—all these, coupled with the increased dependence of artists on the market, helped lead to a preoccupation with formal questions as well as to a vision of art and literature as something self-referential in a dehumanized, dislocated world.

The Marxists focused upon the inevitable crises of capitalism, not merely the disruptions of modernity. Hence they did not share in the crisis of liberalism because they possessed scientific socialism with its explanatory power. However, after the first three decades of the 20th century, a new reality had imposed itself—a reality far from that predicted in *The Communist Manifesto*. Lunn argues that after the defeat of the German left and the rise of fascism, such Marxists as Brecht, Benjamin, and Adorno could become sympathetic to modernist culture because, unlike pre-World War I Social Democrats, they recognized "that as socialists they were not immune" to disillusionment.

The famous Lukács-Brecht dispute Lunn writes of perhaps illustrates best what was at issue in Marxism's confrontation with modernism. Just as he stressed the irrationalism of expressionism, Lukács saw in modernism in general a foe of the literary realism he championed in the 1930s. Literature, he maintained, must grasp not merely what is on the surface but rather what is beneath it, the world's objective reality—a "totality." Modernists, however, ran aground in the chaotic appearances that confronted them. Great realism, Lukács writes, portrays not the most obvious in reality but what is

> permanently and objectively more significant, namely man in the whole range of his relations to the real world, above all, those which outlast mere fashion. Over and above that, it captures tendencies of development that exist only incipiently and so have not yet had the opportunity to unfold their entire human and social potential.

The issue between Lukács and Brecht then, as Lunn emphasizes, was not realism itself but the nature of realism and the reality it grasped and portrayed. For Brecht, Lukács's realism was too constricting and did not allow a full confrontation with a multidimensional and contradictory historical reality—that of the contemporary world. "Literary forms," wrote the playwright, "have to be checked against reality, not against aesthetics. There are many ways of suppressing truth and many ways of stating it." Thus Lukács emphasized socialist culture as the heir to classical bourgeois culture and insisted on the latter's relevance for the emergence of the former, while Brecht emphasized the discontinuity of the world he found himself in with the world of a Goethe or a Balzac. The totality of the modern world—a world of modern technology, corporations, science, and the social life corresponding to them—could best be presented through modernist techniques (montage, simultaneity, and so on). Lukács, in Brecht's view, remained wedded to a more traditional aesthetic in which literature would reveal a total social and historical process through the experiences of concrete, individualized characters. Although Brecht never accepted all the assumptions underlying modernism, he sought to "functionally transform" its techniques for progressive purposes, just as Marx imagined socialism functionally transforming the advances made in the means of production under capitalism.

Lukács's literary and aesthetic arguments—though infinitely more subtle and intelligent—follow a path similar to that of *The Destruction of Reason*. In the latter, reason enables us to grasp the truth of the world beyond the appearances that irrationalists take for reality. Modernism thus corresponds to irrationalism while realism, like reason, lets us understand ourselves and our world.

These parallels may tell us the ultimate source of Lukács's antipathy to Nietzsche; it was not just the morality of the *Übermensch* that (rightly, in my view) repelled him, but perhaps more significantly Nietzsche's claim that "the will to a system is a lack of integrity." What could be more antithetical to a paradigm of historical necessity as well as to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could have better served those (like Adorno) for whom an open Marxism was essential but also insufficient *and* too all-encompassing, given our experiences with reason and unreason in modern times?

Indeed, in an epilogue to *The Destruction of Reason* signed January 1953, Lukács concludes his tome with these words: "Fighting in reason's name, the masses have proclaimed their rights on the streets, their right to share in determining their own destiny." Such a battle took place three years later in his own Budapest against Soviet tanks, and Lukács was on the side of the revolutionaries. History has its cunning. □

Robert Leiter

They Started It!

ROOTS OF RADICALISM: JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND THE NEW LEFT, by Stanley Rothman and S. Robert Lichter. New York: Oxford University Press. 466 pp. $27.95.

Clearly, a reassessment of the New Left and the young radicals of the 1960s is long overdue. And it is also clear that the present political mood, so markedly different from that of 20 years ago, has played its part in this book's composition.

The authors are both academics. Stanley Rothman teaches government at Smith College and S. Robert Lichter political science at George Washington University. Their book is the outcome of four related studies conducted over the past decade. The first and largest was a study of American college students in which a survey questionnaire was administered to over 1,100 students at four large universities. This was supplemented by a second study, consisting of clinical interviews with a small number of male students, who were divided equally into radicals and nonradicals, Jews and non-Jews. The third study was conducted in 1974–75, when the authors interviewed 120 early New Leftists. Then the fourth study, a translated version of the survey, was administered to 230 male students at two West German universities. In each case, participation was voluntary.

All of this information was gathered not just to better understand "the causes, nature, and consequences" of the student movement of the '60s but, more specifically, to explain why, in America, "young people of Jewish background played so large a role."

Rothman and Lichter believe that Jewish marginality "is the most significant single variable in explaining the differential role of Jews in the radical movements in Europe and the United States." The authors argue that exclusion from Christian society has forced the Jews (now as well as in the past) to adopt political radicalism in order "to undermine all aspects of the *culture*" that contribute to their marginality. Though the authors concede that such "subversion" (their word) may involve an attack upon genuine inequities or irrationalities, they also insist that the attack is generally not directed at a particular inequity or irrationality per se. Rather, the inequities are used as a means of achieving a larger purpose: the general weakening of the social order.

The cause of this, Rothman and Lichter maintain, is the Jewish family structure. "Faced by persecutors too powerful to resist physically, Jewish families of the diaspora gradually came to place tremendous emphasis upon inhibiting direct expression of physical aggression, particularly by male children." And for this reason, we are told, the Jewish male radical comes to identify with powerful causes in order to appease doubts about his masculinity.

According to Rothman and Lichter, the early leaders of SDS, who were disproportionately Jews from the eastern part of the country, represent the self-expansive or "protean" form of psychopolitical rebellion. "The protean rebel seeks out change, flux, and fluidity in his life-style, while resisting all forms of psychological closure," the authors write, and aims at "continual destruction of social institutions, insofar as they interfere with individual experimentation." But such a permanent form of revolution cannot generate counterinstitutions. Protean rebellion defines itself solely in terms of opposition and negation, and it is authoritarian because "it is rooted in a deep ambivalence toward power that causes the rebel to oscillate between aggressive and submissive postures toward authority."

But there was a second wave of New Left radicals—those who came into the movement from

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the mid-'60s on and were primarily from conservative midwestern homes—designated here as "rigid rebels."

> Such individuals conceive of themselves as rebels against weak and corrupt authorities. The erosion of the authority of social institutions provides them with a mechanism to vent their rage at "authoritarian" fathers. Their parents had directed their own aggression against "communists" or blacks. Now the children vented hostility against the "Establishment" or capitalism. The ideology was different, but it served similar psychological needs.

Yet in the authors' retelling of the story, the rigid rebels did not act independently. Rather, it was the first wave of Jewish radicals who persuaded the later, more traditionally authoritarian radicals to act in a manner foreign to their nature. "The aim of the Jewish radical is to estrange the Christian from society, as he feels estranged from it." It matters little to the authors that "SDS grew more receptive to organized political violence as its non-Jewish contingent grew in size." And it is of no consequence, as they see it, that in West Germany, where (for obvious reasons) no Jews resided, there flourished a student movement of comparable size and influence. (Clear recognition of this fact would thoroughly undermine the book's thesis.) The only important thing for Rothman and Lichter is that, in America, the Jews were the ones who started it, the ones who *always* start it.

IT IS EASY to be objective and criticize *Roots of Radicalism*. The book is divided into two sections. The first half is given over to analysis and description, the second half to a detailed account of the authors' testing procedures. But though the structuring has its logic, it also makes the book unnecessarily repetitive.

And what are we to make of such language and conclusions as these: "Jewish and non-Jewish radicals scored significantly higher than nonradicals in their phallic-assertive imagery and lower in genital-integrative imagery"? However, it is far more difficult to *remain* objective while reading the book. Not wishing to be cast as an apologist for some of the methods and rhetoric of the New Left, I still must admit that the authors' portrait of "the '60s" in no way resembles anything I witnessed. For Rothman and Lichter it would seem that student radicalism began and was then championed by a wide range of university professors and media people. But the truth is that it took years of protest before the country "turned itself around" and understood the depth and seriousness of its misadventure in Vietnam.

Surely, the movement had far greater variety than the authors are willing to admit. Granted, some people in the New Left were narcissistic and driven by self-interest—or, more to the point, self-preservation. The draft, which is rarely mentioned in *Roots of Radicalism*, was talked about incessantly. Surely, there *were* people who did not wish to lose their elite status as students and as members of the middle class with secure, well-paying futures. But there were also students, radical and otherwise, who cared deeply about the war's immorality and the inequities of the draft.

If the authors had approached their subject from this perspective they might have had a case. But this would have meant a narrowing of focus, and Rothman and Lichter are after much bigger game. One only has to look at the language they employ: Jewish radicals do not oppose their government, they long to subvert it, to undermine the existing social order, to unravel the American civic myth. For a Jew, reading *Roots of Radicalism* is an oppressive experience, something analogous to having a pillow pressed against one's face with ever-increasing force.

At strategic points throughout the book the authors attempt to disarm such criticism.

> We are not arguing that '60s radicals were more pathological, or even more likely to be acting on the basis of unconscious impulses than were conservatives or liberals. And we certainly don't maintain that our findings discredit the student movement or the ideas developed by its leadership.

Why then have Rothman and Lichter written nearly 500 pages in which the psychological imbalances of radicals are described in numbing detail? □

Bad Will

One of the conservative writers who has recently become prominent is Mr. George Will. He specializes in moralistic declamations and quasi-Burkean reflections that seem to have put him a notch above most of his brethren. Imagine our surprise then to read in the New York Daily News *(July 10, 1983) an editorial note saying that George Will*

. . . helped Reagan's staff prep him for the debate with Carter and then appeared on ABC television to comment on the debate and say what a fine job Reagan had done without mentioning his own role. Furthermore, Will knew that Reagan's people had used some material from the Carter campaign and never reported it. Will's column has appeared occasionally in the *Daily News*. It won't anymore. □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"SALMAGUNDI has established an indispensable position in American intellectual life."
—Christopher Lasch, 1975

Salmagundi

#60, Summer 1983, 220 pages

Politics & The Social Contract ON HANNAH ARENDT

* * * *

new essays by

CHRISTOPHER LASCH
GEORGE KATEB
LEON BOTSTEIN
SHELDON WOLIN
PAUL RICOEUR
CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS
NORMAN JACOBSON

plus, reviews by George Mosse, William H. Pritchard, Alan Wilde, Jim Sleeper, Rudolf Arnheim, S. Pinsker

forthcoming

NADINE GORDIMER	A Novella & A Long Interview
JOHN BAYLEY	Politics In The Novel
LEON WIESELTIER	Dark Fictions
FRANK KERMODE	Modernism & The Past
GEORGE STEINER	Our Homeland, The Text
TERRENCE DES PRES	Holocausts
ROBERT ALTER	Post-Modernism

other new articles by Tony Tanner, George Painter, Stanley Cavell, Jacques Barzun, Terry Eagleton, Seamus Heaney, Richard Howard, Denis Donoghue, etc.

* * * *

To order #60 (On Hannah Arendt), send $5.00

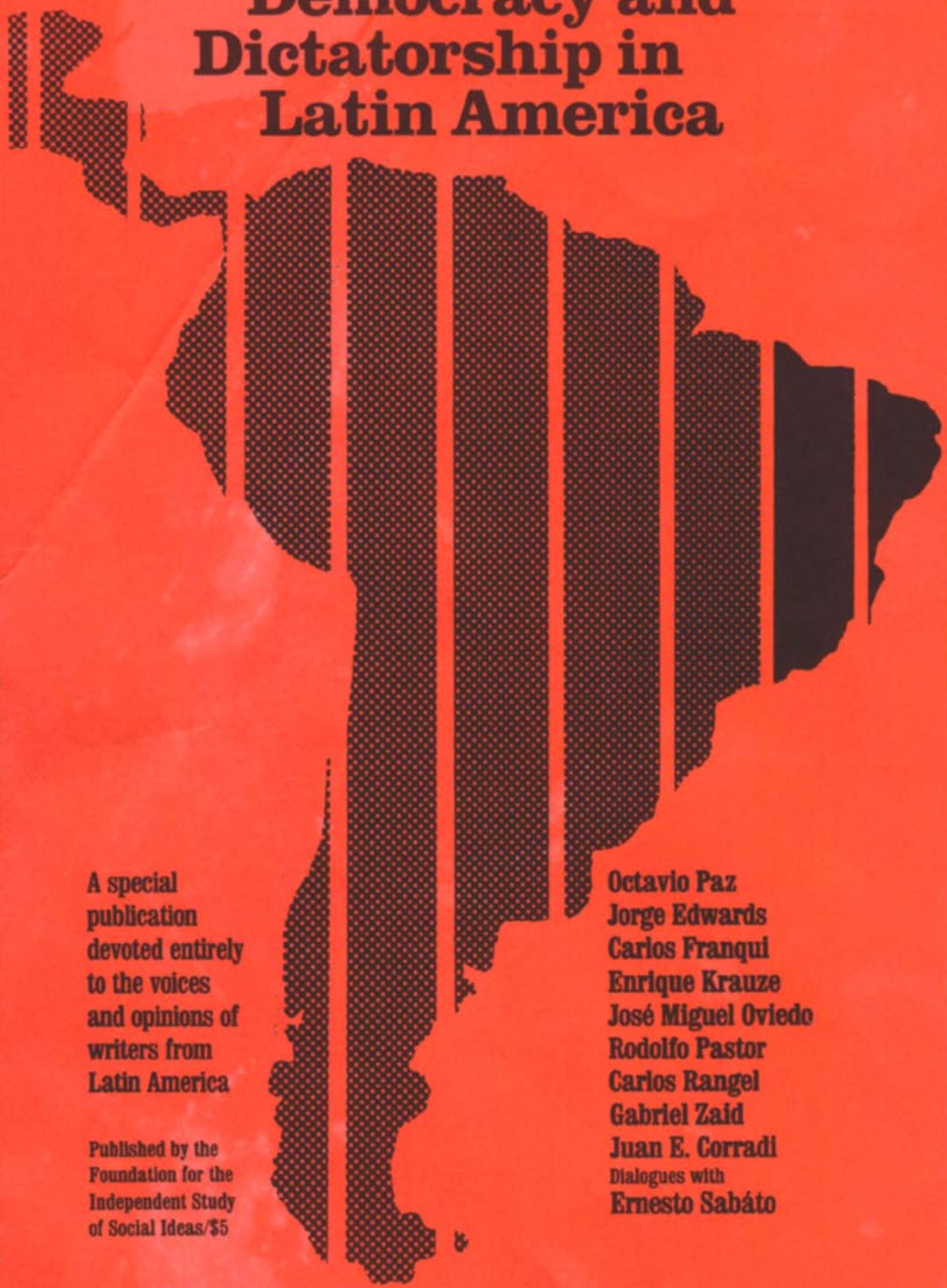
To receive #60 FREE subscribe for two years (8 issues, #61-68) at $15, or five years at $30.

Enclose check with name & address & mail to:

SALMAGUNDI/ Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 12866

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Democracy and Dictatorship in Latin America



A special publication devoted entirely to the voices and opinions of writers from Latin America

Published by the Foundation for the Independent Study of Social Ideas/$5

Octavio Paz
Jorge Edwards
Carlos Franqui
Enrique Krauze
José Miguel Oviedo
Rodolfo Pastor
Carlos Rangel
Gabriel Zaid
Juan E. Corradi
Dialogues with
Ernesto Sabáto

Order from F.S.I.S.I.
521 Fifth Avenue, N.Y. 10017
Price for bundle orders on request.

dissent

521 Fifth Avenue New York, N.Y. 10017

Rochelle Flanders
711 Amsterdam Ave
New York NY 10025

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED